



# messing about in **BOATS**

Volume 33 – Number 11

March 2016

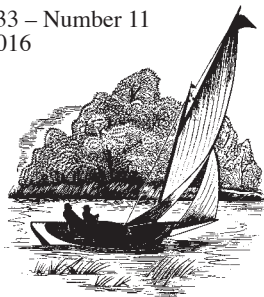
**Special Features This Issue**  
Cruising... Going to Hell for a Pastime  
A Rescue in the Hi Tech Era  
The Voyage of the Ant – T.H.E. Scow  
Threading a Maze of Shoals



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## Commentary...

Bob Hicks, Editor

Time to talk about the content of this magazine, in particular where it all comes from. While we continue to rely on individual readers for much of what we bring you each month, we have been supplementing what we get with content reprinted from other journals. As the last few issues have had an unusually large amount of this reprinted content, I thought I'd make some comments about this.

There's usually some leftover room each month on our 60 pages and we're lucky to have some sources for what I feel are really good small boating tales with which to fill them. Of note over the last couple of years has been input from Great Britain's Dinghy Cruising association and two very active TSCA chapters, the Delaware River Chapter in New Jersey and the John Gardner Chapter in Connecticut.

The DCA journal, *Dinghy Cruising*, is a superb 72-page full color quarterly from Great Britain which is a monument to the volunteer effort of current editor Keith Muscott, who took over the editorial task several year ago following the demise of the earlier long time founder/editor. Keith not only covers the activities and events of the DCA's several regional groups but also edits (and writes) articles relating to dinghy cruising that I felt would be of interest to our *MAIB* wider audience of small boaters beyond the DCA's membership.

In this March issue of *MAIB* we feature Keith's extensive discussion of "The first boats and early cruises of Erskine Childers," author of *The Riddle of the Sands* (see pages 38-45). The eight pages are a fascinating read for any small boat lover and helped us fill up this issue just as they did for Keith. As editors of small special interest publications we share a common need for input from the readers we serve but sometimes we have to write something of our own.

The Mainsheet is the monthly newsletter of the Delaware River Chapter of the TSCA. We have been on their mailing list for years now and over those years have reprinted many articles that we felt were of wider interest interest beyond their own membership. The

earlier photocopied mailings have been succeeded now with a full color online format under the direction of the current editor, Frank Stauss. What I find that I thought would be of interest to all of us are the articles from their members about their small boating activities in the mid Atlantic area.

On page 12 of this issue under their Mainsheet heading is something a bit different though, a discussion about producing chapter "Banners & Brochures," an effort at reaching out to non members who might share their enthusiasm for small craft. I thought this would be of far broader interest than to just their own membership as it presents a very effective program for attracting new members that might be useful to others reading this who might be thinking about organizing and promoting interest in small boats.

Immediately following the Mainsheet pages come two pages from the John Gardner Chapter TSCA. I started reprinting some of their news a couple of years ago as they seemed to have a unique situation with a boathouse of their own and a close affiliation with John Gardner's home base of bygone times at Mystic Seaport. This was mostly a chronicle of monthly club activities that I thought set an example of how such groups can work to the benefit of local small craft people. Wouldn't some of you like to be able to go to weekly evening gatherings at a boathouse of your own to work on projects?

This last year a transplanted New Jersey small boater, Bill Rutherford, took on the editor's job and formatted the club news into a newsletter, adding a new general interest feature, "Traditional Boat of the Month." Bill is a long time reader of *MAIB* and I am delighted to welcome him to journalism and share some of his efforts with you.

From time to time we are able to share similar content from other club journals/newsletters, all of which I feel are worthy supplements to your individual contributions. Rest assured that there will always be room for your own individual stories, they still form the heart of what so many of you seem to refer to as "our magazine."

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## On the Cover...

Something different this month, something we've not done before, hard to believe this is possible after 690 issues but... this month's cover is a repeat of the cover from the March 1, 1991 issue. It pictures Jim Dina paddling a birch bark canoe he built as the Native Americans did. We featured excerpts from his book in that issue and bring them back this month as our "25 Years Ago in *MAIB*" feature.





## From the Journals of Constant Waterman

By Matthew Goldman  
Constantwaterman.com

March the 20<sup>th</sup> marked the first day of spring. I didn't believe it. It was several degrees below the freezing mark first thing in the morning and the wind howled about my house at twenty knots, and gusted to nearly thirty. The clouds grew ugly and grey and extroverted. It didn't seem fair to those crocuses I'd uncovered with my rake the day before. I dashed outside and gave them all hot coffee with lots of sugar.

On Friday, the 21<sup>st</sup>, the lions of March roared and displayed their fangs. The lambs remained in hiding. Fishers Island Sound turned tall and frothy. Thirty to forty knot gusts set the standing rigging on *MoonWind* keening. Helios finally heard her mournful complaint. Urging his steeds, he drove his flaming chariot across the pale sky. The day grew bright, but the winds still had their way.

The 22<sup>nd</sup> dawned fair and cold and calm. Perhaps this is spring, I thought. In the forenoon, I removed the cover from *MoonWind*. I hanked on a jib, started the motor, and backed her out of her slip. The breeze blew a mere 10 knots; the sun regaled; the temperature soared to 47°. On my way to North Dumpling, I surprised a seal in search of a bit of lunch. With so many lobster pots to choose from, she shouldn't have a problem.

I sailed against the wind and tide for two hours and made about two miles. I finally tacked and headed toward Mumford Cove but set and drift brought me quickly back toward Noank. Well, I thought, I'll slip into Mystic Harbor and chase some ducks. By pointing 30° above the course I actually wanted, I had a good chance of fetching the narrow entrance to the harbor. The breeze grew suddenly fitful. It laid me over, then veered around to the north. It backed just a bit, and just in time, to allow me to clear the first marker. Inside the shelter of Morgan Point, it waned to just a few knots but, on occasion, gusted. I beat my way through the mooring field and made my way back to the channel. If I pinched too much, the ebb tide shoved me about. The dogleg halfway up the harbor allowed me to let out my sails.

Aside from playing the wind, I had to admire the lack of boats in the water. Those few in slips were mostly covered over. This apathy for a lovely Saturday afternoon overwhelmed me. I watched a pair of mariners poke beneath the cover on their sloop. "Yep, she's still in there, Maggie." By Memorial Day, when they finally launch, they'll complain of the lack of wind.

Just ahead, the Amtrak Acela rattled loudly across the railroad trestle. A minute later, the breeze temporarily veered and began to stall me. I put the helm over quickly while I still had way, backed both main and jib, and spun her hard. I managed to stay within the narrow channel and rode the last of the ebb back down to the Sound. The wind blew mostly abeam, now. As I passed the head of Masons Island, a hundred yards offshore, someone hailed me. A grizzled man, in a bright red shirt, waved energetically from his deck. "Hello, hello, hello, hello!" he shouted. I gave him an understanding wave from beneath my straining sail. I knew he wished he could come aboard to soak the breeze and sunlight into his system. Spring is a time of birth, of rejuvenation. If you leave your mirror, you needn't see all that grey hair. You need only ride the wind, embrace the sea.

I could nearly stay in the channel traversing the dogleg by Sixpenny Island. Fortunately, there was plenty of water in the mooring field downwind. I missed the last nun by 20', turned and fell off the wind. I wafted by the nearly deserted piers of somnolent businesses: Ford's Lobster, Haring Marina, Abbott's Lobster, Maxwell's Boatyard, the Noank Shipyard. Half a mile ahead of me spread the sound.

Suddenly, I saw a sailing dinghy, a pram, charging across the mile-wide mouth of the harbor. She headed for me at full tilt and might have cut me off but, just then, a skiff came up the harbor and intercepted her. The dinghy slewed abruptly into the wind. Her tight maneuver laid her over 45°. The skiff's skipper took the dinghy in tow. Father and son, I guessed.

Ahead of me, the skiff towed the dinghy past Morgan Point, around Mouse Island, and halfway into West Cove, then released her. The dinghy promptly followed the skiff back out to the Sound. As I dropped my sails by our mooring field, they rode side by side, half a mile away, loudly debating the wetness of the water.

I gentled *MoonWind* into her slip and made her all-a-taut-o. I couldn't have been blessed with a lovelier day. Assured that Spring had finally arrived, I stopped by a drainage ditch on my drive back home and conducted a rousing chorus of 84 peep frogs.



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## Adventures & Experiences...

### Rowing Up to Lowell's

Just happily emerged from reading your clutter commentary in the January issue and found memories of trips to Lowell's bubbling up. When students and I were building Banks dories at Triton Regional High School, we were given a corner of the janitors' storeroom in which to work. You can imagine the dusty clutter there, augmented by ours.

One June, after our latest dory was just launched, a student builder and I rowed *Gudrid*, a Viking female's name, glistening yellow in the sun, on the tide up from Rings Island to our Mecca, Lowell's. I had taken the students on field trips there to meet master boat builders Aubrey Marshall, Fred Tarbox and helpers. They give generously of their time.

We both thought we were crackerjack oarsmen. At mid river, as the shop came up on our starboard quarter, we turned toward our lofty goal where all its windows were open on that warm morning. Fred and a helper spotted us and watched our approach from the main floor.

I told Dan, "Look sharp we are being watched." Together we pulled hard, four oarlocks clicking in unison. I thought we might

# You write to us about...

take off. Then a great CLUNK and we were both on our backs on the bottom forward of our thwarts. We had hit a nun buoy head on, no doubt much to the delight of the onlookers. Later, when with them while we were still red faced, they kindly said not a word about our grand show.

Pike Messenger, Middleton, MA



Our boathouse was once a school and later a fire station. Someone found this RIRC sign that was on our boathouse for 20 years. I painted our name over the "Engine No 2" in the late '80s. That's Salisburyite Harbor Master Ray Pike holding the other end of the sign.

## Information of Interest...

### Found Great Grandfather on Our Pages

I was surprised to read in the January issue the article reprinted from that old *Cosmopolitan* describing my great grandfather Paine's two cup defenders, *Mayflower* and *Volunteer*. Both featured very early use of wood planking over steel frames.

Dick Tatlock, Lincoln, MA

### 1050hp on a 32' Boat!

A local boat near where we spend a couple of months each winter in Florida appears to have upgraded its horsepower since last winter, it now has three 350hp outboards replacing the three 250hp outboards of last year. I asked a boating friend what he thought the fuel consumption might be. He replied:

"I guessed 30 gallons per hour per engine, yes 90 gallons per hour or 1.5 gallons per minute. I googled it and I was wrong, it is 124 liters per hour or 32.8 gallons per hour per engine. Of course you can consume less if you slow down but why would you?"

Harvey Petersiel, Tampa Bay Area, FL



## Information Wanted...

### Looking for Insurance for a Wooden Boat

This is a photo of a 20' boat that I launched in the spring. We had a wonderful summer as it exceeded all my expectations and it is now tucked in for winter.

My problem is that my insurance agent cannot find anyone willing to insure a home-built boat. I asked him to at least insure the outboard and trailer but he says he cannot do that without a boat to go with them.

Do any of you know an insurance company that will cover this? If so please email me at msfifer@bellsouth.net. Many thanks.

Malcolm Fifer, Hayden, AL



## This Magazine...

### Twice Around is Twice the Pleasure

*Messing About in Boats* is the only magazine to which I subscribe, and I have been a subscriber now for about 15 years. I have shared my magazines with others but have always asked that they be returned because I enjoy reading them again. After I finish the issue for the current month, I go back to the issue that I had started after finishing the previous month's issue. That way, I never run out of *Messing About in Boats* material. I am currently rereading the 2010 issues, and while it may be due to my age, in many cases it's like reading the articles for the first time. If I catch up to the current year, I'll go back to my 2000 issues and start over for the third time.

Great magazine! Keep up the good work. I'll keep subscribing as long as you keep publishing.

Jack Niewoehner, Elkader, IA

### Corrections for Dave Lucas

The Snipe was designed by William Crosby, editor of *Rudder* magazine. Clark Mills was better known as the designer of the Optimist pram and the Windmill Class and many other designs.

Mudd Sharrigan, Wiscasset, ME

### Couldn't Just Walk Off

Although I let my subscription lapse in November, I couldn't just walk off, so thanks for publishing *MAIB*. I loved it for quite a while but I am now more of a biker and hiker, although there is still a kayak in the basement.

Mike Flanders, Cincinnati, OH

### Pat on the Back

As last year closed I am remembering those who needed a pat on the back for all their good deeds. You are in the list, keep up *MAIB*, it's a wonderful read for any and every boater.

Dick Wagner, Founder, Center for Wooden Boats, Seattle, WA

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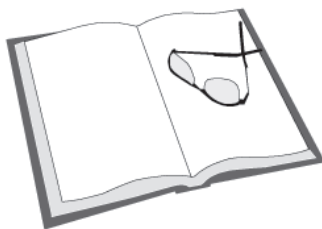
There has been much written about the ecology of the Great Lakes and many, if not all, water resources in the United States and Canada. They are, save for a few, all polluted in one way or another, some severely and others only slightly at present. This book is the most interesting and easily read book about the ecology of not only Lake Ontario, but all waterways. It has no politics. It does have common sense and unbiased information we should all have in order to make informed decisions as to how to proceed in the future, not only for this lake but all waterways, before we pass the tipping point of no return.

On the back cover the author states, "The Great Lakes are truly inland seas. A fifth of our planet's surface fresh water resides within them. They have shaped the destinies of two nations and built vast amounts of wealth. Yet they are in trouble. And of all the Great Lakes, Ontario is in the worst condition. Its story is the story of freshwater everywhere, beset by conflicting demands, industrial legacies of pollution and energy production and ever increasing human needs. It can still be healed and at least partly restored. But we are clearly running out of time to do so."

This book is about a cruise on the schooner *Sara B* around Lake Ontario with her owners, Susan and Chris Gateley, and their crew as they made stops in various ports. It was a combination cruise and fact finding mission to discover for themselves what has been happening to the waters of the Lake, past and present, and what can realistically be done to make changes before it becomes too late for hope. The author quotes the French philosopher Jean Vanier with, "Love is not to do things for people. It is not to tell people what to do. It is to reveal."

The book describes the problems with Lake Ontario and its related rivers, streams and waterways, but it is very similar to what is happening to many other waterways in the United States and Canada that have been impacted by so much dumping, polluting and runoff over decades with limited or no control in the past and present.

The author describes the Lake Ontario cruise and quest for hope in a very readable way that makes you feel like you are right there sailing on board *Sara B* or exploring some very interesting towns and cities in port. You will learn about some of the industrial, agricultural and residential history that impacted the lake watersheds. Also, you'll discover what effect the upper lakes have on the lowest of the great lakes. All things dumped into the upper lakes and waterways, end up in Lake Ontario and flow out the St Lawrence River or do not flow out freely any longer due to hydro dams, locks and the



## Book Review

### *Saving the Beautiful Lake A Quest for Hope*

By Susan Peterson Gateley  
Published by Ariel Associates/  
Whiskey Hill Press

Reviewed by Greg Grundtisch

development of the St Lawrence Seaway. Lake Ontario gets to keep it all.

The author does not blame or ridicule the industries that were the cause of the mess. She points out that it was that industrial and agricultural growth that provided jobs and futures for people and families and great wealth to others. It was then legal, for the most part, to dump and pollute at will, often out of ignorance or carelessness.

It is in the present and the near past that new and dangerous chemicals have been dumped into our waterways. Lakes, rivers and watersheds all over America have had little control or regulation of these dumped or "released" substances. This has taken us to the near tipping point of no return. Global warming or climate change that many of us take rather lightly is now past that tipping point. We can't go back.

Our polluted water problem is here and real and the result will not be fully felt for a few decades with the usual clear social-political hindsight. Unless we educate ourselves with objective non political information, it will be more of the same and the result is predictable. We all lose. We can now only hope to not add to the problems of the past and plan for a better future, a future that will result from our common sense efforts that can at least heal

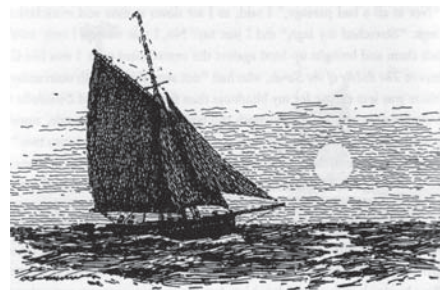
some of the past mistakes and restore some of what has been so ignorantly fouled.

Some may question what a book like this has to do with messing about in boats. The answer is, or should be, obvious. If not, just ask where would you prefer to paddle, swim, sail or row, a dirty polluted river or a clean one? Would you prefer to go boating on a lake that has so many chemicals in it that it will eat the bottom out of your boat? Yes, there was one like that in central New York. How about paddling on a river that catches fire from the many chemicals that float on top? Yes, that happened several times in Ohio and New York. Some of that has been changed but it is still much polluted. Care to drink out of it? Swim, fish, paddle?

I won't reveal the book's ending other than to say that some common sense approaches to what can be done and how to go about it are offered, and also what we as individuals can do to at least not add to the problems is suggested.

If you just don't care about ecology, read the book anyway. It is still a very enjoyable book to read. There is also an educational video coming out that Susan and Chris Gateley are currently producing.

To order the book, get more information or to contact the author, go to silverwaters.com or [www.susangateley.com](http://www.susangateley.com). Susan Peterson Gateley is a former teacher, has a master's degree in fisheries science and has worked in Massachusetts and Chesapeake Bay. She has sailed singlehanded on Lake Ontario for over 20 years and she and her husband Chris sail a 32' Chris Craft sloop *Titania* and also the 38' Tancook schooner *Sara B* that they and the *Sara B* co op volunteers have restored. They sail out of Little Sodus Bay in Fairhaven, New York. She is the author of over a dozen books, (check her website for titles) and teaches sailing to individuals and families as well as women only sailing. They also take out summer charters on *Sara B* from the Pleasant Beach Hotel docks, a beautiful B&B.



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Dear Frederick: Gloria and I are just back from what you jestingly refer to as our “sybaritic week of yachting” with Horatio and Clothilde and your letter was among the many waiting for us. Frederick, I must tell you that during the past week I have seriously considered asking you to join me in an application to have Horatio confined for observation, at least, in a mental hospital. Our brother is suffering from an obsession which leaves him with no grip whatever on reality. If there is a medical term for the condition, it is probably dementia pray-coxswain.

We were due in Baddeck at 1:00 Sunday; we arrived at 3:00, because of trouble with the car. Horatio snapped that since we had already missed the best sailing of the day, we had better cast off, I think, was the phrase “at once.” I asked if we might have a moment to carry our suitcases onto the boat. Suitcases! He cried. At sea! You can’t bring suitcases! I replied that when Gloria and I travel, we generally like to bring a few things with us, a change of socks, my shaver, Gloria’s fresh frillies and so forth and that rather than carrying them loose in our hands, we find it convenient to put them in a suitcase or two. In our circle, this is customary.

Horatio muttered something about sea bags and sea chests. I thought he was talking about Clothilde, who is rather a bag and has an ample chest, but apparently not. The two of them started muttering about lockers, settees, quarter-berths, stowage, sewage, steerage and what-not. When he began talking about souls and overheads I assumed he was taking a fit of religion, but apparently not; the roof inside a boat is for some reason known as the overhead, and the floor as the sole.

When he mentioned lockers, I looked around for things such as one sees in the corridors of high schools, but it turned out that any dark, inconvenient cubbyhole of an awkward shape may be called a locker. Horatio said that none of these was big enough. Apparently this 30’ boat has no space in it large enough to put a suitcase. You’ll have to put your gear in garbage bags, Horatio said firmly. It can’t be helped. I’m sorry. He wasn’t: we could tell from the look on his face.

We transferred our things into green garbage bags. As a result, all of our clothes immediately became wrinkled and musty, and we were never able to find our toothbrushes. Horatio tapped his foot while we stowed away, as he put it. We were to sleep in the quarter berths, which are coffin-like enclosures along the outside of the boat towards the rear, and our things were buried under one of these. The fuel tank is under the other one, by the way; you may imagine how delightful it is for a heavy smoker to lie in his berth and read knowing that the sloshing sound which keeps him awake half the night is highly volatile gasoline under his pillow.

We went outside, I’m sorry, on deck, and Horatio began bellowing mysterious orders. Sway up the genoa! he cried. Loose the gaskets on the boom! Make fast the sheet! Cast off the bow and stern! The sails went up and snapped in the breeze quite impressively.

“Gloria, double the spring line around the bollard and belay the fall aboard!” shouted Horatio. Gloria tried to figure out what a spring line might be, it sounded like a device for drying laundry, until Clothilde came to the rescue.

“That rope there, dear, she said, pointing. Undo it, first.”

## Cruising Going to Hell for a Pastime

By Silver Don Cameron  
Contributed by Annie Holmes

Gloria had spent over \$40 on a pair of yachting shoes from one of the more exclusive stores here in Halifax. She undid the rope, and Clothilde said bring the end back aboard, dear. Gloria put her left foot back aboard, and the right heel of her new shoe stuck firmly in a crack in the wharf. Since the rope she held was the only one connecting the boat to the wharf, the boat sailed away, surprisingly forcefully; it is astonishing how much power a couple of sheets of cloth can develop. Gloria’s left foot sailed away with it, but her right foot remained stuck to the wharf.

“Belay the spring line!” bawled Horatio. “This one?” cried Gloria, tugging at her shoe as the stretch of water under her grew wider and wider.

“Yes!” shrieked Clothilde. “Yes!!!” “What do you mean by belay?” whimpered Gloria, who was by now performing an evolution rarely equaled by Dame Margo Fonteyn.

“Tie it!” shouted Clothilde. “I ca-a-nt!” screeched Gloria. With a pop, the strap of her shoe let go. She teetered for an agonizingly long moment, and then slowly toppled face-first into the harbour water, still clinging to the rope. The boat, whose name is *Medusa*, picked up speed, and began tearing through the fleet of anchored boats like a drunken slalom skier. Horatio tried frantically to steer, but he could see little or nothing under the huge sail that sweeps the decks of the boat from the pointed end back. Gloria was bubbling and gurgling on the end of her towline. Clothilde and I tried desperately to reel her in, like a very angry fish, but to no avail.

“Luff her!” cried Clothilde. “You’ll have to luff her!”

Luff Gloria? The mind boggled. Horatio swung the steering stick to the side. The boat spun right round and all the sails started cracking and banging in the wind, shaking the whole boat. Then the boat stopped very suddenly. Horatio, Clothilde and I all fell down in a crumpled heap around the base of the compass, while Gloria surfed down a little wave and cracked her head on the back of the boat. As I scrambled up, I could see disturbed faces scowling down at us from the side of a large expensive-looking motor cruiser into the side of which we had punched a jagged hole.

As we drifted away, we could hear a good deal of slander and obscenity. Gloria clambered over the back of *Medusa*, looking like a furious kitten who had narrowly escaped drowning. She had lost a shoe, the water pressure had pulled her panties down to her ankles, and she stank of diesel fuel. I tried to calm her while Clothilde and Horatio shouted at one another and pulled the sails and their various ropes this way and that, apparently trying to get the boat under control. In the meantime, we were drifting backwards towards a large, sleek, two-masted sailboat.

Horatio rushed to the back of *Medusa*, carrying what he called the boat hook, a long pole with a wicked looking metal point and a hook on the end of it. He stood on my hand, which made me cry out and bunt him with

my shoulder. This brought him down on top of Gloria. As he stood up, he put his knee in her face and jabbed frantically at the big two-master. He stabbed the boat hook into a rubber boat tied on its deck, and I could hear the air rushing out. The rubber boat collapsed in wrinkles, like a dried apple.

The front end of *Medusa* swung sideways, and the sails filled. We bumped and scraped our way down the whole length of the two-masted boat. There was a piece of wood sticking out of the front of it, a bowsprit, I discovered later, and as we ground and scraped our way over the anchor rope, the bowsprit caught in the wires that held up *Medusa*’s mast. As each of them pulled free, it emitted a musical tone. I don’t know whether all boats are arranged this way, Frederick, but those three wires are tightened in such a way that they produce a very low E flat minor chord when plucked.

Horatio swung the steering stick this way and that, and we escaped the harbour without further incident. The owners of the motor cruiser are claiming \$3,300 in damages, however, and the inflatable dinghy is worth \$1,400. Perhaps the dinghy can be repaired, but Horatio says the motor cruiser’s repair estimate is ridiculously high, and the matter may end up in the law courts.

We ended up in the Washabuck River, an hour’s sailing from Baddeck. Gloria’s temper was not improved when she found that the boat had no bath or shower and that baths could be taken only by filling the cockpit, the trough from which one sails the boat, with tepid sea water and then lathering oneself with dishwashing detergent. It took quite a long time to get the smell of diesel out of her hair, and it was difficult to persuade Horatio that a pan of warm fresh water for a rinse would not be an excessive drain on his supply. It was also difficult for Gloria to achieve much privacy, since three other boats were anchored in the same minute cove.

In the meantime Clothilde was making supper. She does this in a makeshift kitchen which she calls the galley. It is well-named, if you recall the squalid Roman vessels to which felons were once sentenced. Cooking in it reminds me of Dr. Samuel Johnson’s remark about a woman preaching: “Sir, it is like a dog walking on its hind legs. The thing is not done well but one is surprised to find it done at all.”

She begins by getting food from the icebox, a black hole into which she cannot reach except by lying on her belly across the counter with a flashlight in one hand. Out of the cold, milky water which sloshes about in the icebox, she pulls out bits of bleached meat, dissolved lettuce, pallid cheese and limp celery. She lies there thinking for a moment before she replaces the lid and wriggles to the floor. The reason for this is that once she starts cooking, she has no further access to the icebox, since its lid is the only available work surface.

Next she lights the stove. This infernal device is fueled by alcohol, which ignites with a spectacular orange flame that scorches the paint overhead, and burns her eyebrows. It burns nothing else, however, because it produces a flame so cold that it takes half an hour to get a cup of coffee from it. To make a proper dinner for six o’clock, she has to begin working at it by three. Since Horatio insists on sailing as late as possible, she has to cook, generally, while the boat is in motion.

For that reason, the stove is hung from pivots, which make it swing back and forth



like a playground toy. In theory, this arrangement, which Horatio calls gimbaling, keeps the stove top level and prevents the pots from spilling. No doubt this would be true if the boat would lean over to a certain angle and then stay there. Unfortunately it doesn't.

Out on the water, Frederick, I noticed some curious things called waves. You know about them already, perhaps, but the designer of the stove had never seen them. The result was that the stove would start to swing, slowly and irregularly at first, then more regularly and more strongly. And then... well, one afternoon we were crossing a body of water known as the big lake, which is about fifteen miles in breadth. Since we had just finished lunch, it was time for Clothilde to start making supper. She put a big pot of stew on, and as she worked the wind grew stronger. By the time she was done, *Medusa* had fair-sized waves rolling up behind her at an angle.

The boat started to make a strange, corkscrewing motion. Gloria turned greenish and glassy-eyed. Just as Clothilde came up through the hatch, Gloria bolted for the side of the boat and threw up. Unhappily, she threw up into the wind, which then carried her lunch back across her shoulder, onto Horatio's waist and across my chest before hitting Clothilde in the face. Clothilde promptly lost her lunch, and at that moment a wave tossed the boat, throwing Horatio off balance. He reached out to steady himself, but the plastic seat was by now well-greased with lunches and his hand slipped out from under him. He slithered to the floor on his back, and tripped me. I came down with both knees on his stomach, and he was immediately divorced from his lunch, which he thoughtfully deposited inside my rubber boots.

As we all wallowed about together on the floor, *Medusa* herself chucked up her own supper. The stove had been swinging harder and harder, in a steadily increasing rhythm, and the stew pot now achieved liftoff. It came out of the cabin as though it had been fired from a slingshot, caromed off the side of a hatch, sprayed part of its contents over Clothilde, soared over our horrified faces, smashed into the little metal fence on the back of the boat, dumped the rest of the stew over Horatio's legs, and then hurled itself to a watery grave. Fortunately Horatio's and Clothilde's burns were only superficial, though for several days Clothilde's were quite disfiguring. I must say Clothilde was very brave about it.

"Don't worry about it," she chirped. "I'm sick for the first three days every time we go to sea."

"Every time?" I asked, incredulously.

"Oh yes," she said blithely.

By now we had turned into the wind to reach our harbour, and the boat was smashing into the waves head-on. We were all bundled up in sweaty plastic coats and pants. Clothilde gave the tiller, as the steering stick is named, to me and stuck her head down below to light a cigarette. "God, I really needed that," she said, taking a deep puff. "With all that excitement I haven't had a smoke for hours." She took another puff. "Still, despite all these little things, it's really great fun, isn't it?"

A bucketful of water came flying over the front of the boat, shot across the top of the cabin, and smacked her in the face, reducing her cigarette to mushy tangled filaments of tobacco smeared across her cheek.

"Great fun," I said. Frederick, I confess to you that I was being a trifle facetious. For-

tunately, she missed it. As Dr. Johnson once said, these two have found truth to be a cow, which no longer gives the milk they want, so they have gone on to milk the bull. There is no point in detailing for you, Frederick, all the sorrows of that interminable week. I cannot conceive how a man as intelligent as we know Horatio to be could possibly choose to spend large amounts of his time in a plastic receptacle which is unspeakably cramped and inconvenient, and which after a couple of days develops a smell compounded of Clorox, stale bacon and old socks. The ice supply runs out, and you must drink your cocktails warm. The fresh water pump in the kitchen fails, and to get a drink of water you must have someone on deck blowing ferociously into the filler pipe in order to produce a thin trickle of water at the sink. The designer of the boat evidently has never seen a human being; all the seats are right-angled with upright backs, and the most comfortable place to sit is the toilet.

The toilet, however, has its own peculiar habits. At its side is a little lever with two positions: PUMP OUT and PUMP DRY. In the first position, it brings sea water into the bowl and then carries it away, slightly soiled. In the second position it only removes sea water. After using the thing, you must first pump it out, and then pump it dry. I failed to do this, nobody had told me, and the next time the boat leaned over the other way, the toilet belched all its contents out onto the carpet.

You may think I exaggerate, Frederick. I do not. I could write a catalogue of small unpleasantnesses which would go on for pages. The table is supported by a large pipe screwed to the floor. When anyone brushes it, it gobbles and wobbles so that anything on it is spilled. Gloria was not pleased to find a bowl of oatmeal porridge in her lap. The main light above the table is cunningly situated so that when you sit down in the least uncomfortable place to read, your head neatly blocks the light.

There is no ventilation in the forward compartment except a hatch, which has to be kept closed when it rains. After one humid, rainy night with Horatio and Clothilde puffing and blowing in there, they had to hang their sleeping bags to dry; they were soaked with condensation. There is an open window just above the clothes closet, or hanging locker, as Horatio insisted we call it. The side of the cabin into which this clever little nautical window is mounted slants inward. The window collects water when it rains, and then dumps it on your dry clothes when you open it.

Not far from here is the mast, which is made of aluminum, and against which various ropes and wires send up a horrendous clattering whenever the wind blows, which in Nova Scotia is most of the time. I asked Horatio whether anything could be done about this deafening racket.

"I've done it," he said smugly. "I've tied the halyards off to the shrouds with shock cords." He might as well have told me he had rectified his transistors or transistorized his rectum. In any case, I inquired why the horrible noise was still going on.

"Oh," he said, "those are from wires and ropes that run up inside the mast. Nothing you can do about that, at least without an awful lot of expense." It occurred to me that for a man to spend \$30,000 or \$40,000 on a boat which wouldn't allow him a good night's sleep and then complain about the cost of doing something about it was just a trifle absurd.

At that point, this was the first evening of the trip, the boat gave a gigantic shudder, as though it had suddenly developed some fiberglass edition of the palsy. "What's that?" I cried.

"Oh, just the vibration of the mast when she passes through the eye of the wind," said Horatio.

"Nothing you can do about that either, I suppose?"

"I don't think so." Horatio puts up with all of this because, though he doesn't exactly say so, he evidently feels it proves that sailors are tough, and he is one tough sailor. My own feeling is that it proves sailors are pitiful victims of their own mythologies, and that Horatio in particular has clinically significant symptoms of mental disturbance.

I pass over the day when we took the garbage ashore to deposit it one of the yellow plastic bins thoughtfully provided by the Cape Breton Development Corporation. We fled from the harbour before a roaring gale, and discovered only at bedtime that a bag of garbage was stowed under our quarter-berth, and that we had presumably jettisoned Gloria's nightgown and all of my underwear. One of the advantages of suitcases, as Gloria pointed out in a high-pitched scream, is that one does not throw one's garbage out in suitcases.

But the most memorable moment of the whole affair occurred on the fifth night, it felt like the fifth year, of this exercise in gracious vacationing. You have already discerned, no doubt, that living aboard *Medusa* is a sequence of forced intimacies and difficult physical convolutions, as graceful, in one of Dr. Johnson's phrases, as an elephant dancing upon a rope. Now, Frederick, I have a confession to make. Gloria and I enjoy sex together. We enjoy it regularly, and vigorously, and variously. We are prepared for occasional lapses in our swiving, but not an entire week which we are spending together ostensibly in mad pursuit of pleasure.

But sailboats, Frederick, are designed by a species of monk with serious physical deformities. I have already mentioned the quarter-berths, long narrow pigeonholes into which one wriggles so that most of one's body is under the cockpit seats, like a knife inside a sheath. One's head and shoulders are in the main living space, one person on each side of the main hatchway. The hatch leaks, by the way, because the back wall of the cabin slants backwards, so that water trickles down the side of the hatch and drips onto the steps beneath it. Its splash creates a fine, light spray which yields an uncanny sensation of sleeping outdoors on a Scottish moor. The mattress itself is made of thin foam, so that the pivot of one's hip grinds all night into a hard piece of plywood underneath.

Remember, Frederick, that one could buy quite a good house in Nova Scotia for the cost of *Medusa*. But I digress. Gloria slept in one quarter berth, and I in the other. For several nights this had induced in both of us a combination of restraint and frustration. On the fifth night, however, after lights out, we decided to reconsider it. I turned on the radio softly, so that we could not be heard by Horatio and Clothilde, who were sleeping in a strange, triangular bed up at the front of the boat.

Horatio and Clothilde are not shaped like triangles, and I can hardly imagine how they fitted in the berth; their toes were intimate, but their shoulders had sued for divorce. Gloria and I discussed what we were missing, and

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how much we were missing it, and to make a long story short we became determined to resume our conjugal relations. I slid out of my berth, stark naked and eager, and started to cross the cabin to Gloria's berth. At this moment, a light suddenly snapped on in the bathroom, the door of which gives a panoramic view of the saloon. Clothilde, in a billowing nightdress, was easing out of the triangular berth towards the toilet. She turned to close the door, and caught me, transfixed by embarrassment, in the middle of the floor. "Holy hopping Moses!" she breathed reverently. "Great snapping roary-eyed billygoats!"

I take it, Frederick, that the family resemblance between myself and my brother Horatio does stop short of completeness. She caught herself up, blushed prettily, and slammed the door. A lesser man might have surrendered his fantasies but, Frederick, I am not a quitter. I clambered in with Gloria, which was about like fitting two knives in one sheath, and we coupled, defiantly. It was not easy; in fact it was about like trying to achieve sensual bliss in a fallen telephone booth; but we managed.

At first we were gentle, but as the central nervous system asserted its rights we became energetic. We made sounds, and the boat began to rock. Then, carried away by enthusiasm, I abraded my bare buttocks on the unfinished fiberglass above us, and let out a roar like a wounded panther. By now the boat was heaving furiously, and it dawned on me that passion was not the sole cause of it; a sudden blast of wind had caught *Medusa*, and the whole boat was moving jerkily sideways.

"I knew she was on a lousy bottom!" shrieked Horatio. "That fluke won't stick in there far enough to do any good!" He rushed past us, wearing only a pair of blue boxer shorts with red seagulls emblazoned on them, threw the hatch open, and vanished into the pouring rain while I tried manfully to shield Gloria from the hailstorm of hatch boards he had let fly.

By the time Horatio returned, I was draped over the table while Gloria daubed my trailing edge with mercurochrome. Horatio apologized, and said that he thought the anchor was dragging and he had gone on deck to veer more rode. I didn't care what he had done; I was pleased enough with what I had done, despite being ignominiously wounded

in action. Clothilde appeared in a cloud of flimsy nylon, and suggested hot chocolate and a snack. So there we sat around the table in the middle of the night, drinking cocoa and eating oranges and pretending nothing had happened.

It was one of the most bizarre post-prandial moments of my life. So that, Frederick, is the story of our excitement in the rarified world of yachting. I suppose polo is just as bad, or fox-hunting, or any other of the upper-class amusements from which it has pleased a generous God to spare us. In the meantime, I have been recovering from the week's trials by soaking myself in the urbane, rational outlook of Samuel Johnson.

I have never been so struck by Johnson's penetration and acuteness as I have this past few days, and the acme of my pleasure was to discover that Johnson must have had a similar experience, and judged it with the same ruthless realism he applied to works of literature. "The man who would go to sea for pleasure," said Johnson, "would go to hell for a pastime."

I remain, Dear Frederick, your affectionate brother, Charles.

### About This Story

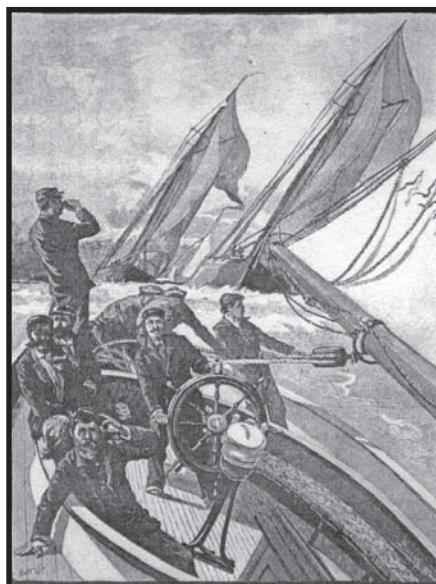
By Annie Holmes

I met the author, Silver Donald Cameron\* in 2000 up in Cape Breton in the tiny town of D'Escousse on the island of Isle Madame, where my little house is. In fact I bought the house from Cameron a couple years after I met him. Before that I had read the story in the SWBANS (Small Wooden Boat Assn of Nova Scotia), and laughed so hard I thought it would be fun to share it with my ScuzBums guys by printing it in the ScuzBumsNews (no longer in print). In order to do that I asked one of the SWBANS guys to ask Cameron for permission to reprint the story. The word back was it was ok. So I did. The whole time I was typing the story into my newsletter format, I was laughing so hard I could hardly see the screen. Cameron left D'Escousse about ten years ago I think, as he had had some serious heart problems. I don't know where he is now.

At one point he and his friend, Farley Mowat (author of *The Boat Who Wouldn't Float*), were going to spend two years cruising the St. Lawrence and do a joint book about it. Cameron bought a bigger boat for them to use but Mowat was just too old for the trip and I don't think they ever did write anything together. A pity, because they both are marvelously funny. These two are among the top Canadian writers ever.

When I met my husband Dudley at my marina, he had a 30' Newport sloop, on which we spent many weekends. I know very well about the areas where a person can be abraded, the murky depths of the ice box, the stinky and semi-operational toilet, the leaky areas, the sloshing gas tank and bilge, etc. Otherwise Cameron's story wouldn't have been quite so funny to me. His description of the 30-something-foot plastic sailboat are spot on.

\*<http://www.silverdonaldcameron.ca/about-silver-donald-cameron>





As a result of the tragedy in July when two young boys were lost at sea off the east coast of Florida, my company, MiraTrex, Inc., added a new "Buddies" feature to our PRO CHARTS marine navigation application in an attempt to help prevent similar tragedies in the future. As the president of MiraTrex, I never would have imagined that my own son would be one of first people ever to be rescued using our app.

On Tuesday, December 22, 2015, my son Kevin and four friends decided to go duck hunting near Weeki Wachee. Around 6 in the morning, I awoke to a frantic phone call from Kevin saying the 17' Mako boat they were in had capsized and they were in the water needing help. Thankfully, Kevin keeps his iPhone in a waterproof LifeProof case so his phone worked and he was able to make calls. The other boys' phones were all lost when the boat overturned. Kevin also had our PRO CHARTS app installed on his phone, which he was using to navigate to their hunting spot on the salt flats about five miles north of the Weeki Wachee River.

When Kevin first called me, he said they were about three miles offshore in about 6' deep water and he had already spoken with the Coast Guard who told him they were sending a helicopter. While the situation may not have been quite as urgent in the summertime, in December the water was only 66° that morning and the boys were at risk of hypothermia if they stayed in the water too long.

I hung up with Kevin, got out of bed and went downstairs to get my iPad. With the Buddies feature in PRO CHARTS, I was able to view his location on screen and I saw that he was actually about one mile out from the marsh flats, not three miles. I took a screenshot to capture where he was in case the signal was lost.

I called Kevin and told him his correct location but before he could answer, the call was disconnected. He then texted me and said to call 911 and give them the correct location. When I called 911 the dispatcher told me they were aware of the situation, but they wanted me to contact the St Pete Coast Guard which was coordinating the rescue. I called the number provided and spoke to a Petty Officer Matt (I don't recall his last name). I told Matt I had an updated position for the capsized boat and he replied, "Go with the numbers." I read off the coordinates to him and he said, "How are you able to give me the exact coordinates? Are you using Find iPhone or something? I didn't know you could get lat lon numbers with that."

I replied, "Yeah, something like that, I have a company that makes a marine navigation app that allows the user to see other users and their location history with a feature that's like Find Friends."

He said, "So you know his exact coordinates? Wow, that's a great app! We've got a Citrus County Fire Rescue boat putting in now and a helicopter taking off in five minutes. I'll call you back when they're on station."

I continued texting with Kevin and he told me they were holding on to the bottom of the capsized boat and all their hunting gear was gone. I asked if he could dive down and find anything but he said, "No, it's still dark and we're drifting."

A few minutes later, I received a call from Petty Officer Matt saying the Citrus County Fire Rescue boat picked the boys up simultaneous to the helicopter arriving on scene. He said they were all safe and he was

## A Rescue in the Hi Tech Era

By Jay Stipe

pleased to tell me it was a successful rescue. I thanked him and we wished each other a Merry Christmas.

After the boys were taken back to the dock at Weeki Wachee, we talked about how to go back to salvage the boat and try to recover the lost gear. I told Kevin I still had his location history so I could see where they stopped and then started drifting. In addition to displaying an icon of a buddy's position on screen, our app allows us to touch the icon and bring up his current location and location history for the previous 48 hours.

I texted Kevin the list of coordinates. After an extensive debrief with FWC and no small amount of paperwork, the boys were finally able to head back out on borrowed boat later in the afternoon. The plan was to right the capsized boat and tow it around to bail enough water so it would float again. It soon became clear this wasn't possible so the boys instead turned their focus to retrieving their lost gear.

Unfortunately they couldn't just pick one point and say that's where the boat overturned. If Kevin had thought about it at the time, he could have touched the Mark button in our app when they first went down which would have provided the exact location, but when your boat is going down in the dark and your body hits the cold water, that's not something you think about at the time. So instead of having an exact location to work with, they had to go by the series of marked locations to identify a path to search. Nevertheless, it worked great and within an hour or so, the boys were able to find most of their lost gear.

Finding the gear was nice, but the far more important part of this event is that all five boys came home safely. I also couldn't be happier that our app worked as intended and helped in the rescue effort. I never anticipated it would also be essential in the search and recovery effort after the fact. We designed the buddies feature to record a buddy's location history so you see where he was heading when the signal was lost. This feature was added as a direct result of the two boys that were lost at sea in July. Our thought was that if you could see the track of where they were heading, you might be able to narrow down an initial search area. It never occurred to me that the location history would also be useful in recovering lost gear.

There are certainly several safe boating lessons to be learned by the boys as a result of this event. In particular, it's critical to always verify the seaworthiness of your boat before heading out. Apparently one of the bait well valves was left in the wrong position which caused it to overflow onto the deck and leak down into the bilge through a hatch that wasn't closed properly. In the daytime this probably would have been noticeable, but they didn't see the overflowing bait well or the open hatch in the dark since they left the dock around 4am that morning.

There are also a couple of other less obvious points that all boaters might want to consider. In particular, this whole episode could have possibly ended in tragedy if Kevin hadn't had his iPhone in a waterproof case.

They were only in about 6' deep water but it was dark and the water was cold. Some of the boys were wearing waders which instantly filled with water and made it impossible for them to swim. They had a VHF radio on the boat but it was lost as soon as the boat overturned. Without a working cell phone to notify someone about the emergency, it could have been many hours before anyone even realized they were missing.

If you think about it, a waterproof iPhone case potentially saved these boys' lives. Panel mounted GPS equipment, flares, a whistle and a VHF radio are normally essential tools in an emergency, but if a boat sinks quickly and capsizes before you can get to them, they're all useless. I'm not suggesting anyone replace any standard electronics or safety equipment, but having the ability to call someone and identify your position with a marine navigation app is extraordinarily important as a backup. Of course, I'd love it if everyone used PRO CHARTS since my company offers it, but there are several marine navigation apps currently on the market. However, at the moment ours is the only marine app with a buddies feature that allows you to see other people and view their recent location history.

One final note about safety is the importance of filing a float plan before you head out so someone knows where you're going and when you're expected to be back. This can be as easy as verbally telling someone or sending an email, but you need to be in the habit of actually doing it. We have a Float Plan feature in PRO CHARTS that makes it as easy as simply clicking a button to email your intended route to a friend or family member.

It takes less than ten seconds to do but you can't forget to do it. Kevin didn't send me a float plan for his duck hunting trip so I had no idea where he was going or when he expected to be back. We'll definitely talk about that to make sure he sends a float plan before heading out from now on!

**12/30/15 Update:** I just learned about country singer Craig Strickland who is lost and feared dead along with a friend after their boat capsized in a storm while duck hunting on Kaw Lake in Oklahoma. This is another tragedy that may have been avoided if they simply had a cell phone in a waterproof case and our app so someone could see their location. These are two very similar events that started out with a recreational day of duck hunting that turned bad quickly. Sadly one of them ended in tragedy while the other was a successful rescue story. My hope is that we can spread the word and prevent similar tragedies in the future and turn them into rescues as well.

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## Where Would We Be Without Them?

Dreams... where would we be without them? I hate to think about it. Early on it was baseball for me. Ate it up. Natural ability put an end to that. Next came surfing. I jumped right in and never looked back. Ability wasn't really there either. The fellows I hung with I always considered better than myself. They were, too, not false modesty. Making and fiberglassing surfboards soon became a mainstay, cheaper. When a hot young kid in Waikiki wanted one of my designs, I was so honored I just about gave the surfboard away, less than cost. Baseball player, businessman, I wasn't.

Scratch three. There was a first in this for me, and an only I believe. A hitchhiking trip from California to Cocoa Beach, Florida, with a surfboard. My first reshape cutdown of a longboard, 6'10". That trip was about dreams as well and is a story for another time.

Looking back, surfing into sailboats seemed a natural progression. At the time I was a loose cannon, many years later I found out what kept me from self destruction, still yet another story.

Dreams! Where do they come from and on what are they built? Some would say the family environment I was blessed with paved the way. Not so! In my nigh on seven decades I've seen many dreamers going forth from near destructive pasts and going very well, I might add. But this is really a story about sailboats, sailing and building them. Or is it? The handle can fit anywhere, a happy marriage, a tall ship and a quiet smoke on the foredeck after making harbor.

The first business failure, built upon a dream, won't be the last of either one. There are natural enemies of dreams. Various names accompany them. I call them naysayers. I listen, politely. Polite is good. I generally don't hang around them if I can help it. Dream killers, different from dragon slayers, if even the dragons be only in our minds, the dream killers walk among us. Stay away, stay away.

I've been dreaming of yet another build, another sailboat. The dreaming part, by this time of my life, comes very easy. The armchair sailor is often not given credit for his many ventures, and misadventures as well, often considered in a humorous light. There's a latent explosiveness sitting in that Lazyboy across the room, those without dreams can't understand.

The next voyage, and perhaps the necessary build, is germinated, planned to execution, way before the feet hit the ground running. There's a term in the Bible, to quench a smoking flax. We don't want to do that. No, not to our children, our family, friends, peers. Even the casuals we meet along the way can be spurred forward with but a few words from us.

Dreams. Be glad of them. My Linda, some years ago, gave me a small wall hanging. It reads "Dare to Dream," another, not a wall hanging but a small polished stone with an inscription reading "Dream On." With such encouragement, how can one not?"

## Texas, the Other Half

A couple of years ago I was fortunate enough to sail with the Texas 200 crowd from Port Isabel, Texas, to Seadrift, Texas. A great bunch of people. It was hot, windy, long days, sore butt. It was also great. A long

## Dreams...

By Mike Beebe

way from 7-11s. I had been wanting to do the other half. This past week it worked, almost. I lack now just 50 miles.

I don't want to break down out there. My initial trepidation being the set of river locks before Matagorda Harbor, well there were actually two sets, two rivers. Sailing through them, some paddle, yep, no engine. Went off smoothly. Ran aground only twice this trip.

The comfort level went something as such. Next time in August I will tow a small dinghy for the generator to power the air conditioner I will install. Yes, it was a bit hot. Mosquitoes were not a problem until I spilled my citronella candle, slept that third nite fully clothed, being tired, I slept.

Ate aboard, slept aboard, cooked aboard, the frozen water milk jug as it thawed leaked and spoiled a bunch of food, which kinda led to ending the trip at Stingaree Marina on the Bolivar Penn.

Another first, down from Sargent there is the last swing bridge I was told in the state of Texas. My handheld radio had ceased functioning on day one. I approached a power boater who informed me he had just radioed in to open, follow him, he says. Well, they don't open the entire swing bridge for small powerboats. They had installed a draw bridge at one end, 14' wide. The fellow proceeds to enter and looks back motioning me to follow. I point to myself, the raising draw section, and he nods yes.

OK, my mast is short, and just a few feet from the opening a gust of winds sends me heeling quite a bit, earning me a long blast from some ship's horn. Now I know there're no ships around so I know that's for me, possibly abort, abort this foolish attempt.

Naw, I figure I got clearance, I'll be in a wind shadow in a moment, the heeling won't happen, and if I need to induce heeling for mast height I can lean a bit. I'm sure the bridge operator hadn't seen this before, neither had I.

I did have a foot or so clearance, I waved my thanks as I got to the other side. That guy will have a story to tell. "Some crazy guy in a sailboat..." It was a good trip.

## The Twelve Footer

The twelve footer was an old Lehman given to me by a fine lady in Flour Bluff. She knew what she was getting rid of, I knew what I was receiving. An empty derelict shell, full of dreams. It followed me home to California where a rebuild began. She followed me back to Texas in a moving van, something I never thought would happen. She was cat rigged, single sail, mast forward. So I gave her a balanced lug with boom furling. Ala Matt Layden. Worked fine.

It was time for adventuring, leaving Cove Harbor, sailing south, turn left at Conn Brown Harbor, heading to Port Aransas. Was to be gone two days. Plenty of food, water and coffee. Wind was up to low 20s, I figured another three hours or so to anchor for the night.

It wasn't to be. About a mile from the left turn, mid channel, the mast step gave way. Don't panic! My thoughts seemed rather loud. Still on our feet, a quick look round, all safe. Gathering in sail, boom,

yard and a tangle of lines. In the midst of the fire drill I see downwind a soft landing. It's gonna be alright. The thoughts are quieter now. Mast down and now secured, drifting to the island's edge of sea grass, I'm beginning to enjoy the adventure.

What's next? No cell, no handheld, sport fishers coming by, guess I could flag one down. Make some coffee. Have a bite to eat. Think this through for a bit. There's no danger, won't be missed until late the next day, I'm thinking. There's really no hurry. Guess I'll spend the night here. Set the anchor to keep me away from the bank while sleeping seems like a prudent thing to do. With wind direction being what it is, mid summer, I figure in the morning I can drift paddle back to Conn Brown. Shouldn't take too long.

It didn't, it was a nice morning. A kindly gentleman at the bait stand had a partial can of Bondo laying around which he gave me. The mast step glue bond I had originally built had given way. Not having any sandpaper, I used a knife to scrape and rough prep for the Bondo. Let it set for an hour or so. I figured with a half sail up I could limp home back to Cove, no need even to borrow a phone. Limp I did. Took a while but, like I said, it was a nice day. Added two bolts to that step when I got home, still holding.

## Paradox



I almost put my Paradox up for sale yesterday. Paradox #2. The second one I built after having sold the first one because I missed it so. What's a fellow to do? Well, I waited before listing it on the net. A good thing, too, before I went to bed I was off on new adventures, if only in my mind. The mind actually is where adventure begins. We read something, the seed is planted, it germinates, takes root and those who are inclined to wandering are off again. Most of the time it's only from the armchairs of our dreams, but sometimes those dream roots go deep. They take hold and never let go.

I met a fellow recently who was having problems giving away a boat he had bought ten years ago. The boat languished, the dream did not. A nice enough guy, the dream, the boat and the owner were thoroughly connected. I conversed with him over the net. I understood, I told him, yes, I understood and understand. Many a sailor understands as well. When retirement comes and health still allows those "dreams that are only in your head," compliments of Bob Dylan, still maintain their edge, still alive, still sparkle. When we read of another 70ish year old going out, the rekindling starts anew.



At my brother's place one windblown afternoon, both being surfers, while overlooking the beach I said to him, "How many waves do you ride from here?" Dreams, some people don't understand, they think they don't have any, I suppose. Dreams are what give drive, the mother wanting grandkids may be different from a sailor's, but dreams none the less. I read last night of a fellow preparing to take a 12' sailboat to the Cape Horn area of South America. I'm glad I didn't list the Paradox.

### Can We Laugh Yet?

Just not enough experience, that's all it is really, and not letting the embarrassment keep you at the docks. Sailing engineless came of necessity, frustration, and good old lack of knowledge. Engineless sailing equates sailing purity, in my case it hides a plethora of shortcomings. The old adage, one foot for the gas, one foot for the brake, fits me to a tee. If the outboard doesn't start on the first couple of pulls, I'm lost. Never learned, this old dog will go down with his ways.

I've owned 'em over the years, never really liked them, beyond my ignorance, they're noisy and they quit right when I need them. One eventual fiasco, with two brothers as crew, the wife and her girlfriend standing on the sea wall waving goodbye. Up main sail, let it luff, start engine, cast off, pull in mainsheet, throw engine in reverse. You can imagine the circus. Sail pulling forward, engine pulling opposite. It's true, all of it.

That kind of situation gives a boat side drift, side drift right into some rather expensive yachts. Kill the engine! Kill the engine! OK, OK! Mark, quick, on the bow, fend off. Whew! That was close. But still no room to sail in such a narrow channel. "Hey, buddy, throw me a line, I'll give you a tow." Oh, thank God for good Samaritans.

Almost back to the dock. The Sammy has different thoughts now and yells, he can't do this and throws back the towline. Quick thinking, Mark grabs the line and over he goes, swims it to the dock. Another close one. "Get that engine figured out or I'm getting off this boat," yells Marty! OK, OK, it'll be all right. The wife's friend says something about the difficulties. My Linda replies, "Always, it's always something."



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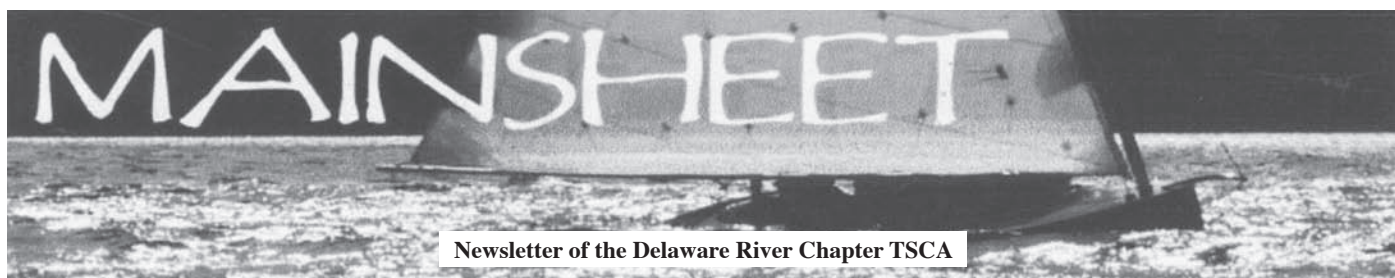


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## Newsletter of the Delaware River Chapter TSCA

### Banners & Brochures

By Frank Stauss

At the June 2015 chapter meeting, Tom Shephard suggested that our chapter look into having banners and brochures made to advertise our club at future events. It was agreed that this was an excellent suggestion and we should proceed. John Guidera advised that he knew of a person who could assist in this endeavor.

At our August 2015 chapter meeting, John introduced our membership to Rachel Cobb. Rachel, a graphic designer, told us of her ideas concerning our needs. A committee made up of John Guidera, Carl Weissinger, Tom Shephard and myself was formed to work with Rachel on these projects. With Rachel's excellent guidance and assistance two banners and a brochure were designed.

The work has been completed. The two banners have been delivered and the brochure will be done well in advance of the upcoming Woodworking Show in February. The banners stand approximately 6'

tall and retract into rolls which are housed in their own hard case. They can be set up and taken down very easily.

The banners vividly depict in color and photographs what our group is about. Images of rowing, paddling, sailing and building are displayed. Photographs from Andy Slavinskis and other members were used. You may recognize some of the photographs from the beautiful calendars that Andy has produced over the years.

The brochure explains in words and pictures about our chapter. Anyone wanting to join us will find all of the information they need to become a member. Once again, the brochure has been produced in color to attract attention. Additionally, the brochure has been designed in a way that it is not time sensitive. We will be able to use the design for many, many years to come.



Paradox



Rosie Mae



Comet



Sussex Cob



Wayfarer



It had been a year of cancellations which was surprisingly confusing to all our schedules. The weather was bad for St Michaels and it didn't seem right for there to be no sailing on that first week of October. It was like hopping from summer to winter without any in between.

Then electrical fire in the electronics of *Quintessence* cancelled our challenge to the Chesapeake Bay Schooner Race, but I had backup. A gang was forming for a long weekend of camping and day sailing at Janes Island State Park. Most were regulars to the TSCA, Doug, Phil, me, Kevin, Barry and a couple of newer members in their Caledonia Yawls, Peter G and Harris B. It is an experienced gang.

While the weather reports were not promising, we have learned over the years that even in ugly weather we can still hunker down in a nice camp with fresh seafood and a roaring campfire. All were eager. We gathered our boats, trucks and tents for another go.

We launched on Thursday noontime and headed northwest up the Annamessex River. The river forms a kind of funnel with a wide mouth and narrowing quickly. It can become quite rough when the westerly funnels downriver, but it was quite mild. Marion is a scenic waterfront town and we explored up to the waterfront graveyard at the head of navigation.

Friday was a more promising day with a light northerly that was predicted to build up in the afternoon, so we headed south into the southern canal that connects Crisfield Harbor and Pokamoke Sound. The canal is quite shallow as low tide approaches and the bigger boats had their hands full short tacking against the wind. Then we all had a firm beat home against both tide and wind. We got home before sunset and ate fresh fish, crabs and shrimp at a favorite seafood joint. We then sat around a roaring fire and solved the world's problems until it was time for bed.

Saturday promised steadily increasing wind again from the north so we rushed out for a good breakfast. I lobbied for a visit to Hazard Cove, a favorite lunch spot across the river. Barry left his Melonseed ashore and sailed with Harris. Double handing gives Barry more time for pictures so they sailed through the fleet taking pictures while we

## Tangier Sound in October

By Mike Wick



beat downriver. About 11:00 the wind really quieted down, just as I was facing the exposed rounding of Hazard Point between Annamessex and the Manokin Rivers, so I shook out my reef just in time to face a sudden hard blast from the northwest. Harris has a theory that you should say loudly, "It's time to start planning to shake out my reef," and that will bring the wind. I had a strenuous rounding of the point, but my Haven 12½ was invented for afternoon sailing in Buzzard's Bay and she weathered these conditions like a champ. Boy, did we have a wild ride home, dead downwind and surfing on almost every wave.



It was a wild night with a cold northerly boiling down on our campsite. We huddled over the campfire in all our clothes and put a little something inside our bodies as well to keep in the heat. My good thick winter sleeping bag has always done well in the cold, but this time the zipper broke. I rummaged

through my car for enough emergency blankets to make up the deficit. My tent blocked the wind and my cot and mattress kept me sleeping warm and dry.



Sunday was softer than in the night and most of the gang had to go home, but three of us lightweights, 700lbs of moveable ballast, huddled in Kevin's catboat *Little T*. We sailed out to Smith Island in another day of building norther. We made it out to Smith on one tack, jibed and sailed all the way back on our second tack. The wind faired just enough so that we could fetch the launch ramp. We hauled the boats and broke camp to face the drive home mostly before dark.

Winter can be long and boatless, but if we can squeeze in some trips during the shoulder months it isn't half so bad. No bugs, the sun isn't too hot and few calm conditions where outboards are needed. The autumnal conditions add spice to a long summer of light winds. We chose to day sail and, had we camped out in the boats, the windy conditions on Saturday night would have been cold and uncomfortable under boom tents.

On last October 30 Mr Suter and his students completed a very large project that has been two years in the making. The skiff *William D. Nelson* was launched at the public ramp to Spicer's Creek behind Lucky Bones Restaurant. LCMR Superintendent Christopher Kobik had the boat named after his late mentor with whom he had constructed boats of several varieties years before.

The project was originally brought to Mr Suter by Superintendent Kobik and members of the Cape May Maritime Museum in June of 2013. Suter, a special education teacher, wasn't the first choice, admittedly, but had a reputation for handiwork and a background in construction. He welcomed the challenge and started with his first class that fall.

The boat itself is a St Ayles Skiff which has its origin in Scotland. It is 22' long with a 5'8" beam. The kit was purchased from Hewes & Hewes Co in Maine (<http://www.cnc-marine-hewesco.com/skiff.html>). Construction is clinker plywood style.

Putting a boat together, kit or not, can be difficult. Not every part of the boat comes with the kit. Each leg of the build does not

## St Ayles Skiff

By Lower Cape May Regional High School  
Submitted by George Loos



always come with instructions. This makes for countless hours of researching blogs, websites, photos and videos online. A big nod goes to the people at offcenterharbor.

com for sharing their remarkable boat building video collection.

Kelly McConnell (high school industrial arts teacher) has been with Mr Suter from the beginning and has proven an invaluable resource in knowledge and skill as well as giving necessary instruction, supervision and even her classroom to advance the project.

Mr Suter has had five classes' worth of students involved with the process. The quality of their work varied as greatly as their attention spans but most enjoyed the construction process and continue to ask when the next "build day" is going to be.

Mr Suter's class may have had the lion's share in the building of this first craft but they will be the first to say that it would not have been possible without the efforts of many outside of the classroom, including co workers, friends, mentors and family.

There is another skiff already in the making and Mr Suter hopes that after the initial learning curve, things will hopefully run a bit smoother. Photos of the build can be seen at <http://www.suterm.wix.com/boat>.

## View from the Side Deck

By Bill Rutherford

The year's first thin flurry of snow filtered through the air as I looked across the Thames to the New London Light, standing white against the gray sky in its fresh coat of paint. We learned a lot about the three lights the New London Customs house has under their wing, I now have a new appreciation for what it takes to recondition and maintain these lighthouses.

The New Year has begun, we look forward to winter builds, spring refits, summer outings and fall rows. And your TSCA Chapter is here to facilitate all those activities. If you have a pet project or activity, please suggest it. We'll help make it happen. If you have a passion you would like to share, bring it to the group in the form of a program or lead an outing. Lots of varied activities out there, that is what makes our group so interesting.

Planning ahead, The Catboat Association meets right here in Groton the second weekend in March and for those of you who like long car trips, the Maine Boatbuilders Show is in Portland, Maine, the third weekend in March. Looking even further out, our National TSCA Meet is at the WoodenBoat Show the last weekend in June and the Maine TSCA sponsors the Small Reach Regatta the last week in July. Lots happening.

Closer to home, the Mystic Small Ships Modelers plan their model building show March 19 at the Seaport's Stillman Building as well as their Ship Model Show both on the land and in the water in front of the Visitor's Reception Center on June 18, the week before the WoodenBoat Show. Always fun to watch the RC models charge around the boat basin, some are pretty large and some, like the *Monitor*, well armed. They are also working on a group build of a 3'+ model of the tug *Kingston*, the one guarding the Seaport's southern entrance.

The Seaport will remain open winter weekends so the Longitude Exhibit can be viewed before it leaves at the end of March as well as the new Whaling Exhibit. There is a new activity center in the Mallory Building that is great fun for kids of all ages, our grandkids kept us busy there building, playing games and doing our own puppet shows. And the Smithsonian Series started January 14 with a presentation on connecting the world with time.

Meanwhile, throw another log on the fire and enjoy this video about boat builder Ralph Stanley and boat building in Maine, *Ralph Stanley, An Eye for Wood*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MC0QOHQUj8>



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## Another Successful Year

By Ellie Czarnowski

2015 was another successful year for our John Gardner Chapter. We again hosted UConn Professor Syma Ebbin's marine sciences class for a barbeque after their annual clean up of Pine Island in the spring. We had our first official regatta at the UConn campus beach this summer and multiple group rowing events during the year. Our incoming president, Bill Rutherford, along with George Spragg, Andy Strode, Rob Pittaway, Bruce Cressor and John Symons, completed the building of the *Nina*, a sturdy, and colorful rowing and sailing boat. Karen Rutherford fit a donated sail to her and the club members took the maiden voyage during the regatta. Thanks to the lead of Phil Beheny, all of the club dories were put through a round of maintenance and in 2016 we will be replacing our first dory, the *Jane*.

## The December 20th Solstice Row

By Phil Beheny

We had lovely weather, a little colder than it had been, but a great row to the Mystic Seaport where Ron and Leigh met us at the shipyard dock. John Hacunda, Larry Magee, Mary Pine and myself were the rowers. Bill Armitage, Mary Rainy, Ron and Leigh joined us at the Harp and Hound afterwards.



## Race Rock Light

By Ellie Czarnowski



Susan Tamulevich, Executive Director of the New London Maritime Society (NLMS), presented an informational slide show of the area lighthouses acquired by the Society, during our annual Holiday Dinner at the Custom House Maritime Museum in New London, Connecticut. The NLMS now has three area lighthouses to promote and preserve in addition to the spectacular maritime artifacts housed in the Custom House museum. They have educational programs for school children and encourage visitors to the museum on Bank Street. They run boat tours to the lighthouses, New London Harbor Light, Ledge Light and Race Rock Light. There is more information on their stewardship of the lighthouses and the tour boat information on their web page.

## Around the Boatshops

Peter Vermilya is progressing with planking his Delaware Ducker, he welcomes quiet winter time in his shop. Carl Kaufman is setting up frames for his *Maud and Emeline*, a flat bottomed Atkin skiff. Bill Meier continues rebuilding his 1920s launch as shop temperatures permit.

Mike Magee has completed planking his South Jersey Beach Skiff, next step is flip it over and install interior frames, thwarts and trim. He is working from Chapelle's lines and offsets from a model from the late 1800s, plans are from the Smithsonian with a skeg keel rather than the boxed Sea Bright model. His goal is to complete it in time to make it to this year's Small Reach Regatta in Brooklin, Maine, the last week in July.

Planking complete.







Out the door.

At our Avery Point Boathouse, scarfing the planking has commenced for the replacement dory project. Bill Armitage demonstrated use of the West System scarfing attachment to an interested group December 18. Next step, cutting plank shapes from patterns.



Using the scarfing jig to cut the bevels.

At the Seaport Boathouse the Culler Butthead Skiff *Skye* and Seaford Skiff *Helen Packer* completed their paint and oil treatments and moved out under the cover of the Boat Shed. The Chaisson dory skiff *Fly* soon joined them to make room for the Gardner Peapod and *Captain Hook* while work continued in the Gardner Boat Shop refastening the Beetle Cat *Lil Babe* and repainting the Beetle Cat *Elvira Tucker*. Meanwhile, Rich Traskos sanded and freshly varnished sets of oars.

Buck Lawton taping the peapod.



## Traditional Boat of the Month Sea right Beach Skiff

By Mr. Cleat

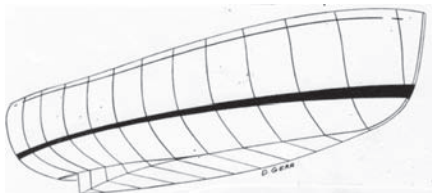


Jersey Beach Skiff under sail. (Courtesy of Gig Harbor Boats).

The Sea Bright Skiff is a wonderful boat, burdensome, seaworthy and easily beached. Its design evolved to be able to leave and return to an open sandy beach subject to substantial surf and winter storms. The town of Sea Bright, New Jersey, is on an open coast similar to our Rhode Island beaches except that it is oriented north and south so one returns in summer before an afternoon southwesterly and in winter before a northeaster. This requires a boat light enough for four men to grab ahold of and get up on the beach far enough to unload two men and a load of fish, then get up on a horse drawn wagon to trailer on home.

The Seabright usually comes in stern first with the bow in the air, pushed by the surf. Quite spectacular. Lifeguards still do it to this day in modified fiberglass versions with self bailing cockpits that drain through scuppers on the sides. Annual lifeguard competitions are quite competitive as they charge off the beach, haul in a "victim" and return through the surf.

Hauled up on the beach, the skiffs wait patiently on their narrow, flat bottoms, oars at the ready. The bottom boards are about one third the width of the boat and come to points on both ends. This is accomplished by tucking the garboards up under the second streak in a reverse chine for the later third of the length of the boat. To further complicate construction, the garboard is rabbetted in all around from the stem, along the flat bottom board and into the sternpost. This helps hold things together when being banged about in the surf. All this ends below a pretty heart shaped transom. The transom has substantial freeboard and is tilted aft 30°+ to help keep the surf out.



Perspective drawing of underside of Sea Bright Skiff. (Courtesy of David Gerr)

From the sketch it can be seen that the bottom board stays low and open all the way to the end of the boat. This was not lost on those rowing fisherman when make and break engines became available about the turn of the last century, they placed the engines low in the boat and ran the shafts out the stern through an enlarged stern post.

The skiffs quickly became motorized. About the same time Prohibition came along and enterprising fisherman could pick up some spare cash bringing illicit beverages in from Rum Row off the entrance to New York Harbor. Bill McCoy found things a bit hot so anchored his schooners just outside the three mile limit and relied on small craft to bring his uncut whiskey ashore.

A bit of an arms race ensued. By the early '20s the length of the skiffs increased to 28' powered by 60hp Pierce Arrow engines making 15mph empty. Boats out of Keyport soon increased to 42' powered by 190hp Mianus engines that could do 22mph loaded with 500 cases of liquor. Then war surplus Liberty aircraft engines became available and dropped into 28' to 32' skiffs that were fast but a bit difficult to maneuver. Meanwhile the Coast Guard built 40 footers powered by a pair of Gar Wood Liberties that would do 40+mph. The rum runners responded with a 50 footer with a pair of 400hp Liberties that would haul 500 cases at a "service speed" of 35mph. They peaked out with a 535hp Viking engine. These remained the fastest boats afloat until the WWII PT Boats came along.

But we are not interested in horsepower, are we. No, of course not. So we will concentrate on oar and sail from the days of fishing for fish off the coast. A perfect day of fishing would be a beach launch into a calm dawn, a row out to the fishing shoals just off the coast, a successful day of hand lining and a nice sail home before an afternoon southwesterly sea breeze. The sail rig was easily set on an unstayed mast, usually a peaked sprit rig with a balance jib tied to the top of the stem. We would steer with a sweep off the stern. We all know how easy it is to stow a sprit rig, just roll up the sail around the mast and sprit, both of which are shorter than the boat so all fits inside, balance job and all.

Since fishing season was mostly May to November, barring a sudden summer storm, that was pretty much the routine. The fish were brought in, cleaned and put on ice from ice houses dug into the beach and placed on fast boats to make it to New York's Fulton Fish Market and satisfy New York's burgeoning population's request for fish on Friday. That was the way life was for a long time until fish traps and pound boats came along, but that is another boat for another time.

I know what you are thinking. That Sea Bright Skiff would make an excellent oar and sail boat for expeditions like Maine's Small Reach Regatta. Row out to an island in the morning and sail back in the afternoon in time for happy hour.

Meanwhile, think about the advisability of a small boat which evolved to carry two men, their fishing gear and 300lbs of fresh fish that can be rowed and sailed in open waters. Consider how sailing would improve with the addition of a centerboard, rudder and tiller. A fine expedition boat to bring you home despite that sudden summer line squall. If cutting all those rabbets seems difficult, John Gardner has some suggestions involving false stems and covering boards in his detailed design analysis, Chapter 23 of *Volume 1, Building Classic Small Craft* and if you succumb to the lure of internal combustion, see his Chapter 9 of *Volume 2, Building Classic Small Craft*. If the "easier maintainability" of fiberglass appeals to you, visit Gig Harbor Boat Works website, ghboats.com and see how well a West Coast boat builder constructs an east coast design. Beautiful results.

## Gray Fleet

The *USS Milwaukee* (LCS-5) was supposed to be the sine quo non of Navy ships, a veritable Swiss Army Knife of vessels. Commissioned in November 2015, all levels of the Grey Fleet from the Commander in Chief to the lowest tar were excited. And she almost made it out of the bay!

*Milwaukee* experienced an engine anomaly almost immediately. Depending on which journalist, politician or shipyard worker you believe, an engine had severe and significant damage requiring total replacement, or it had the usual bugs and problems new engines typically experience during their initial sail.

"The crew noticed metal filings in the lube oil filter and locked the port shaft as a precaution," Scoop Deck blog reported. The ship lost lube oil pressure again during steering tests due to the same problem. Lockheed Martin engineers are working frantically on repairs but they could not indicate the length of time the ship is unable to sail.

*Milwaukee* was supposed to be on station in the Pacific by Christmas and now could be months away. This, of course, places significant pressure on the ship whose mission the LCS was to replace, screwing up crew leave, time on station, repair schedules and budgets. No one is very happy.

Arizona Senator John McCain (R), chair of the Senate Armed Services Committee, had apoplexy over the situation, demanding heads of anyone remotely connected with the problems. Mr McCain, third generation Navy and former presidential candidate, is not only the Navy's biggest supporter, he is also the Navy's most ardent critic. Engineers connected with the development of the engine say that the metal slivers found in the filters are not a major issue and can be readily fixed. We shall see. As a total neophyte in the area of anything mechanical, I wonder why the problems weren't discovered on the sundry trials before the Navy took possession of the ship. It was launched in December 2013 and had two years of testing, weapon installment, etc, before the commissioning.

## Vikings

For all you Norwegians and wannabee Scandinavians, the *Draken Harald Harfagre* a modern interpretation of a Viking longboat, is being prepared for a transatlantic voyage from Norway to North America via Iceland and Greenland. The owners are looking for crew to make the 2016 cruise. The ship is not built to authentic representations but it closely resembles a Viking ship. It does have an engine and a toilet but beyond that it is pretty Spartan (is that a mixed metaphor?).

*Draken Harald Harfagre* is 115' long with a beam of 27'. Weighing in at 80 tons, the ship has 3,200sf of sail and allegedly hit 14 knots with a huge square sail. It is a wonder to behold and a beautiful vessel.

Alternatively, the *Aegir* is indeed a replica of a Viking longboat. Unlike the Norwegian boat, this boat is a product of Orion Alderton and Toby Maigaard in Australia and has been built mostly by hand. The ship is built for oceangoing adventures originating in Sydney. The King and Queen of Norway visited earlier this year and gave their blessings or whatever they call it. Grab your horned helmet and sword for a watery vacation.

## Oceanic Issues

The US Navy is voicing a growing concern over the melting polar ice cap that could



## Over the Horizon

By Stephen D.  
(Doc) Regan

lead to a major shift in our military planning. Already Russia is sending commercial vessels through the Northwest Passage that raises the hackles of the Canadians who claim the Arctic waters north of their country as a Canadian sphere of influence. The Navy predicts that within 25-35 years cargo ships and even cruise liners will travel directly over the North Pole that will by then be ice free in the summer.

The DOD notes that the Navy and the Coast Guard do not have the ships necessary for protecting the sea line of communication in the Arctic; worse, neither have an action plan for the region. The Defense Department also points out that major economic and political currents will change with the differing sailing patterns. They cite that the shortest distance between North America, Europe and Asia is via the Arctic and not over the current traffic lanes across the Pacific and through the Panama Canal. As more European and Asian ship change shipping lanes, current ports will no longer be important, and minor or non existing ports will rapidly become the norm. How will this impact economics in Panama or the Port of Los Angeles? Will ports in Greenland and Iceland become the boomers of the future? Where shall we assign fleets?

An adjunct concern is the rising of sea levels. The temperature of the ocean is rising, causing melting of ice that has been frozen for thousands of years (some core samples are over ten thousand years old). As the ice melts more radiant heat from the sun is absorbed by the darker exposed land mass and is not reflected back into space. This heating causes greater weather divergences, changes the magnetic fields including the magnetic North Pole, and alters gravity that in turn alters the distribution of water (note that the sea level of the Pacific is higher than the Atlantic). The Navy notes that 4% of Greenland's glaciers have transformed from ice to water.

While accurate predictions of rate of sea level change, the Navy estimates that within 35 years Miami, New York, New Orleans and Boston will have significant high water problems. The Navy Oceanographic experts also predict that several islands will be underwater including the Maldives, Seychelles, the Marshalls and Kiribati. Dr Don Walsh, a former Navy oceanographer and officer, now serving as a DOD consultant, claims that by 2050 the rising sea levels will create over a trillion dollar's worth of damage to the US.

## White Fleets

Wind Star Cruise's *Star Pride* ran hard aground on the Pacific side of the Panama Canal causing some serious hull damage. All passengers were safe and their total costs refunded; furthermore, they were allowed to stay at a Costa Rican resort for the remainder of their vacation or be flown home. The damage proved to be extensive enough to cancel the present cruise and the *Star Pride*'s cruises for the next year have been terminated as well.

A new port has been cited as the most popular cruise stop. Cozumel, Mexico, is now #1 in North America beating out chronic top spot Miami. With over 503 port calls from 31 December 2013 to 1 April 2014, it eclipsed all other ports. Royal Caribbean has seven ships that regularly stop at the Mexican island, Carnival has 13 ships that make port there, Norwegian Cruise Lines has over 70 different ships that call and Disney has three ships that stop at the port.

One of the most interesting websites is <http://www.miamicruiseshiptracker.com/MiamiCruiseShipTracker.html> that keeps hourly track of every ship worldwide. The site provides rate of speed, direction, destination and map coordinates. One can spend hours tracking ships or seeing where they are bound.

The expansion of the Panama Canal is 96% complete. The current two channels have been widened and dredged to a greater depth. A third series of locks and a much larger channel were designed for the Panamax ships too large to transit the canal.

There are houseboats and boathouses, now there is a house on a boat. Ft Lauderdale's ROW Management Limited has had its *World* upgraded at Wartsila in Finland. The 196-meter ship contains 165 individual houses that are owned by the residents who also own the ship itself.

Upgrades include a new wastewater discharge system that meets the stringent requirements of Baltic Sea nations. *World* also upgraded navigation and communication systems to meet the increasing demand of the residents.

In spite of the periodic outbreak of disease and the occasional suicide, the White Fleets seem to be doing well. Carnival will launch four new ships in 2016 as a component of 17 new ships to be added between now and 2020. The cruise company already maintains a fleet of 99 ships worldwide operating under four different brand names. The ships are being built at Italy's Fincantieri's Marchera shipyard. The *Koingsdam* will be a 99,500-ton *Pinnacle* class ship for the Holland America Line. *Carnival Vista* will be the largest of the company's ships at 1,055 feet from bow to stern and 133,500 tons in weight.

## Commercial Fleets

With the UN's COP 21 environmental conference long concluded, the world of commerce is looking hard at the shipping building industry. While the final agreement at Paris ignored shipping, the industry itself did not hesitate to proffer important plans for lowering CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. The American Bureau of Shipping proposes increased usage of liquid natural gas as a maritime fuel. Some cruise ships are already adapting LNG as fuel and Tote Maritime's *Isla Bella* will be the world's largest container ship driven by LNG.

Safety is a substantial concern but the sundry organizations involved with shipping have established training, engineering and development plans for building and sustaining ships run on LNG. ABS spokespersons claim that the world is ready for new ships. They further agreed that US shipbuilders should be amply ready to create LNG ships soon. However, ABS noted that with the surprisingly lowered oil costs and a highly questionable world economy, shipbuilding in general is in a wait and see mode.

Shanghai Zenhua Heavy Industries (ZMPZ) won the contract to build 22 container cranes for PSA Singapore. The cranes



will cost approximately \$167 million and must be delivered in 2017 at PSA Singapore sites. ZMPZ was exuberant about “positive earnings” from this contract. Evidently this is better than “negative earnings.”

The Marshall Island flagged *Star Maria* dealt with a fire in the hold while in port in Venice, Italy. Local firefighters had to deal with the blaze apparently caused by spontaneous combustion while unloading coal. They attempted to extinguish the fire and sealed two holds for several hours. *Star Maria* is a 2007 bulker displacing 82000 tons.

Dryad, an industrial maritime security and intelligence firm, noted that piracy and high crimes on the sea was up 10% in 2015. Areas of note include the Caribbean, Central and South America and the Middle East. However, insiders expressed concern over the increase of piracy off the coast of China. Southeast Asia is, as always, the highest piracy area.

Charleston, South Carolina, is the fourth largest container port in the United States, 1.97 million containers flowing through the area was a 10% increase over 2014. Interestingly, the port authorities claim that the port usage will increase as much as 50% by 2020.

With the Atlantic Seaboard increasing in commercial traffic, Georgia and South Carolina announced a joint development of a new port on the South Carolina side of the Savannah River. Both port authorities will own the Jasper Ocean Terminal. The agreement opens opportunities for terminal design, financing and execution. The Army Corps of Engineers will have to issue the final permit.

The entire mid Atlantic coast has noted significant increase in shipping. Part of the reason cited is the delay in the new construction and modernization of the Panama Canal.

#### Ferry Boats

The *Spirit of Tasmania* damaged her internal loading ramp when she crashed into a pier in Australia. The mooring lines parted and she became adrift. After a day of tugboats pushing and pulling the ship was again moored. Davenport based TT Lines said that the ship’s schedule has been cancelled and damage is under assessment.

P&O Ferries has closed a money draining Larne-Troon route effective immediately. Evidently the Scots and the Irish were not that thrilled about running back and forth on a lesser fared ferry. However the company

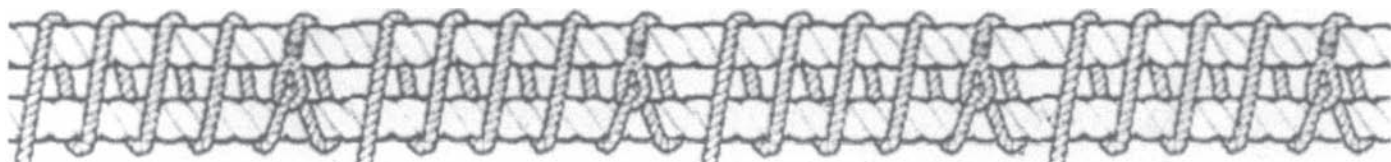
did announce that the *European Highlander* and the *European Causeway* would undergo \$720,000 onboard improvements over the next 18 months.

The Norwegians are taking environmental concerns to heart and have passed some of the stiffest mandates for ships operating in their waters. Wartsila, the giant Finnish boatyard, has designed a ferry that is highly efficient, zero emission and low water resistant. The Ship Design and Electrical and Automation office proffered a design of a battery engine hybrid LNG fueled ferry. Fuel consumption is negligible and local emissions are eliminated. Even operating with full fuel engines, consumption is halved. The ship can carry 60-120 cars.

#### Hiatus

Beyond the Horizon will take a short hiatus due to the absence of the author who is attempting to regain health, a good nature and an appropriate sense of humor. Doc Regan is under the single minded supervision and command of his Finnish spouse who truly believes that all good sailing originated in Finland.

## Off to Build the Starship





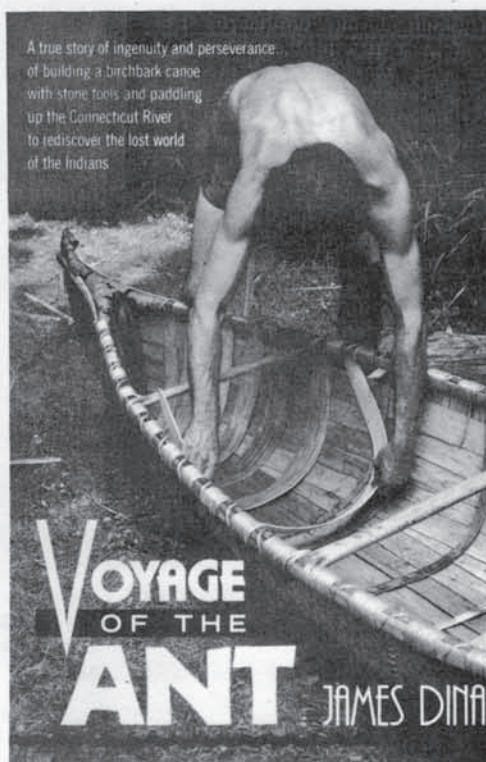
# The Voyage of the Ant

James Dina's book about his efforts to recapture the nature of life in New England before the Europeans arrived focuses on his building a birchbark canoe and paddling it up New England's major interior waterway, the Connecticut River. It is a fascinating narrative of a modern man attempting to relive a way of life the indigenous Indians had created to fit their environment.

The book intersperses discussions of building the canoe using only materials and tools that were available to the pre-European Indian culture, with his narrative about his trip on the river, travelling mostly as the Indians did, carrying his own foodstuffs and gathering wild edibles along the way. Inevitably he had to confront modern day intrusions impossible to avoid on the river, but he accepts that reality and doesn't let it detract from his own personal experience.

The building of the birchbark canoe using only stone age tools and indigenous materials from the forests is of particular interest to anyone who appreciates traditional canoes, what could be more basically traditional. So herewith we bring you extensive excerpts from Jim's book on that building process.

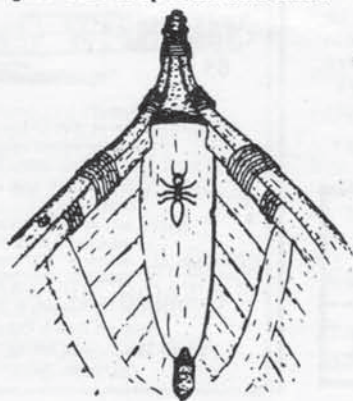
If you'd like an autographed copy from the author, order one from James Dina, 789 Main Street, South Windsor, CT 06074 for \$14 postpaid.



25 Years Ago  
in **MAIB**

## The Ant

THE HEADBOARD is a vertical piece of wood that encloses the open space where the canoe's gunwales sweep upward to meet the stem piece. Its position is such that the canoeist's gaze falls naturally upon it as he propels his craft. It is the last visual symbol between himself and the waters beyond. As such, it is properly decorated with a figure that holds special meaning. I had searched in vain for a design. Then I considered the temperament required of a traveler about to undertake a strenuous yet monotonous voyage upstream against current and wind. Without hesitation, the Ant suggested himself. He is a patient, tireless worker who keeps his eye on the immediate duty without losing sight of a distant goal. With my stone knife I etched a nameless ant on the headboard, hoping he would be up to the tasks ahead.



The Connecticut River flows southward a scant half-mile behind my home. From there it is just fifty miles to the river mouth in an arm of the Atlantic called Long Island Sound. Northward the river bisects Massachusetts and then becomes the common border between Vermont and New Hampshire. The uppermost thirty miles of river are entirely in the little hump of New Hampshire that stands above Vermont. There is a puddle just short of Canada called Third Lake. It is the river's source, three hundred and sixty-one miles from home. The Connecticut is the natural gateway to New England. It is the watery thread that ties together four states. It defines the region in a very real sense by draining its heartland. Although not as wide and deep as New York's Hudson River, it is longer. Four hundred and eleven miles from source to sea, it is large enough to be majestic and commanding, yet small enough to be personal and inviting.

I visited the river often, watching it rise and fall in response to the seasons. Broken stone tools and potsherds from another age dotted the sands at low water. I picked up the artifacts and enjoyed the tingle every archaeologist feels when he unearths a piece of the past. But I also felt something missing. Living human beings had produced these items. The pieces remained as evidence of what they had done, and from them the archaeologist could even recreate their life-styles. But the testimony of silent stones left me cold. It told me nothing of what the people felt or who they were. I needed to know. Ten years of walking the riverbanks hadn't given me the answer, but it *had* made me realize how little the river and local surroundings had changed since those artifacts sustained the lives of real people. Here was a setting that was still relatively remote, with traces of the primitive world strewn about. This was the right place to make contact even if the time was wrong. Echoes of the past were faint but persistent. It was like listening to voices through a closed door that I couldn't open. There had to be another entrance.

There was. It came in the form of a gift, a thin book. The elegant profile of a birchbark canoe glided across the front cover. Thoughts of making



such a canoe had crossed my mind over the years. The little volume in my hand wasn't an instruction manual for building canoes. It was John McPhee's book about Henri Vaillancourt of Greenville, New Hampshire, who makes fine birch canoes. Immediately, I knew that this book was the second key to my quest, like a small spark falling on dry tinder. This canoe was the obvious vehicle I needed to become a time traveler into the Connecticut's past.

A canoe is so close to the water that one can feel inadequately connected to the river in any other vessel. Of all canoes, the birch is the most organic, as its parts retain much of their original living character. The flesh of planking and skeleton of gunwales and ribs are united with ligaments of pine root. The headboard, so aptly named, gives it the vision and temperament of whatever symbol is emblazoned on it. The bark skin, which served the birch tree by retaining its precious water, is reversed against the river to keep water out.

Building the canoe and voyaging in it would be a major undertaking. Still, I was confident that I could produce a serviceable craft. In New Hampshire, Henri Vaillancourt was building better canoes. Somewhere in Canada, native American descendants were doing the same with steel tools. Merely reproducing their efforts at lesser quality would provide me with a canoe but little else. As far as I knew, no man living today had built a birch canoe with stone tools. Limiting myself to the tools and materials available to primitive Americans would require me to rediscover ways of thinking and doing that had disappeared centuries ago, and would admit me into the world of the past. The river waited. The canoe would speak for itself when finished. It was my great hope that I could recapture the spirit of those lost times in the process.

## Tools

Picture yourself standing in the meadow of a remote woodland, or just in the park. If you need a switch for swatting away deerflies, a branch broken from the nearest tree will suffice. Breaking it is simple, but the green fibers are resilient and take some twisting. The result is not neat but it is easily prepared with the human hands—and it works. Your own physical abilities can take the project a little further. If a smooth stick is preferable, the thin bark can be shredded off with your fingernails or teeth. What if you want one side flattened? A fingernail, and patience, will enable you to split it down its length. In each stage, some part of the human body produced the tool directly. Next try to sharpen a stick at one end, for digging, poking holes, or protection from growling dogs. Neither tooth or nail is likely to suffice as the wood is too fibrous. Drilling a hole anywhere in the stick is even further out of the question. Additional progress demands a new approach. Find a flat rock, or nearest pavement in the park. A few minutes of abrasion will sharpen the hardest wood. A natural sliver of stone or piece of broken glass twisted back and forth will carve the shallow beginnings of a hole.

As rudimentary as this new procedure seems, the concept behind it is momentous—one tool used to fashion another tool. Only man has ever done this.

I began playing a game whenever I went into the woods or meadows. With the picture of a finished birch canoe in my head, I walked through the landscape, seeing every natural raw material for what it was, blocking out all thoughts of tool processes or semi-finished stages. What parts of the canoe could I make now without tools? Nearly none, I concluded in short order. Technologically, I felt inadequate. A new question became pertinent: what can be made on the spot even if it is not part of a canoe?

This was the key. If I were to relive man's mechanical history during this brief year or two, I needed one-way vision: starting as simply as possible, building what I could instead of what I was supposed to, viewing each stage as the pinnacle of achievement, and being satisfied without the frustration of knowing what came after the birch canoe.

The nearest flint supplies were in the Hudson Valley in New York State. Several years ago I had learned of a quarry site there and visited it to see

what I could find. Whatever the mine's initial condition, it was now largely overgrown with mature trees. No native tool manufacture had occurred for centuries. Under the leaf cover were countless chips. Here and there was the heart of an exhausted cobble. Digging about turned up an occasional piece that had not been worked. No doubt, there was a great deal of usable material in the hillside, but getting at it would require considerable effort. Generations of native Americans had worked the most obvious material—from the last Ice Age down to the seventeenth century—before flint was eclipsed by white man's iron. Finally, I arrived, to visit among the ghosts of vanished craftsmanship, trying to recapture a time that no longer existed.

I daydreamed of the past, of discovering a virgin outcropping of flint, unworked and undepleted. What a feeling to pick up a cobble, consider its possibilities, then crash a hammer stone against it with casual regard for the outcome, knowing that a thousand others await a similar test. The near reality of the vision was overpowering. This was indeed the correct place, but I was centuries too late . . .

We were passing a series of low hills on the left. To our right, fields and broken woods dropped away toward the Hudson River. Suddenly a larger bulldozed section appeared with a convenient driveway leading into it. Our reactions were simultaneous. Bob braked and turned hard left. We stepped from the car onto ground nearly paved with flint.

"Thwack!" The hammer resounds as I swing it into the precious black stone in my left hand. A thin dark blade ripples loose and strikes the ground with a clatter. There it joins a growing pile of chips. Some have been there but a few moments, others since the first ancestors came to hunt along the ice. This stone is not like others. It is smooth and shiny. When it is broken, it yields a sharp cutting edge. It is found only in a few places.

Select a flint cobble and study its possibilities. Strike off larger pieces with stone hammer, thinner ones with the heavy antler. Abrade the edges with a quartz pebble and strike again with the light antler tip. Stop working when a thin, leaf-shaped blank has taken shape. It is neither knife blade nor projectile point, but can be fashioned into either with some final retouching. At this stage the chance of successfully completing the piece outweighs the chance of breakage. Such an item was highly tradeable, hence this was the form in which most flint left the quarry site. I had produced twenty-five such blanks,

The wispy clouds parted for a moment, bathing the landscape in the tawny hues of late afternoon. I looked up, mindful of the surroundings for the first time in hours. My eyes searched the valley's distant folds and met with little to suggest that this was anything but the end of the last glacial epoch. I could have been a Paleo-hunter, watching for the distant passage of game herds. A single sound reminded me that this was all real. It was the *thwack* of an antler hammer nearby. A fellow artisan was preparing tools.

Fire was the final element over which primitive man exerted an influence. Fire's domestic form is always a useful tool. The problem is not how to control it, merely how to obtain it. Each of the rustic methods has some limitation. Sparks generated by striking flint against steel are hot and easy to produce. But I didn't carry anything metal.

Then there is friction, "rubbing two sticks together." Every fire kit of this type contains two essential pieces, the fire drill or spindle, and the fire board, often called the hearth. Heat is generated by spinning the drill tip in a shallow pit in the flat hearth. Small, hot particles of wood dust collect in the notch that runs from the pit to the edge of the hearth.

I pursed my lips and sent a fine spray of moisture into my opened hands, slapped them shut on the spindle, and spun again, faster this time but with less pressure. Dust overflowed the notch, insulating the hottest particles deep inside the little pile.

My arms couldn't hold out much longer. I tipped the spindle back and spun a last time. If the birth of a spark were to occur, this would be its moment. I lifted the drill and gently pushed the dust from the notch into a nest of shredded cedarbark tinder. With my hand I fanned the little pile, just hard enough to clear off the outer cinders. Smoke swirled from side to side. I was hopeful. I fanned harder. A faint orange glow appeared.



# Seek

I had settled firmly on this idea of building a primitive birch canoe. But how does one begin to construct something for which he lacks the parts, the tools, even a firm plan?

My first concern was finding materials, all from the natural environment. I wanted to act as part of the system, not a detached harvester, and this affected how and where I searched. Whenever convenient, I walked or jogged to an area that interested me. But what if circumstance made it inconvenient? Should I use the car? Primitives on foot would have been willing to go just so far to obtain supplies. I could only guess at the distance so I made conservative estimates. A single day of walking, about twenty miles, felt right.

*Betula papyrifera*, appropriately nicknamed "canoe birch," grows across a wide swath from Newfoundland to Alaska. At its eastern end, the band dips deeply to include our Great Lakes region and all of New England. Not surprisingly, the traditional range of Indian birch canoes was restricted to the region of really prime trees, roughly northern New England and Quebec across to the Great Lakes.

No primitive birch canoes survive from southern New England. The specimens displayed in museums are from farther north and, for the most part, were made during the nineteenth century with steel tools.

Now I looked at the trees with a more critical eye. There is an ideal combination of large trunk diameter and straightness, branch-free length, and resilience of the bark itself. Such trees are never common even in prime birch country. I guessed they were rare enough in primitive times, too. Back then, birch bark had many uses, which included fashioning containers and covering dwellings. Of course, the best trees were sought out exclusively for canoes. Today, my direct competition from humanity was negligible. Indirectly, however, agriculture, lumbering, and housing development all reduced the acreage I could search, offsetting the advantage I enjoyed in being the area's only canoe builder.

Actual harvesting of birch bark is easiest in early summer, when the sap is flowing and the bark slips readily from the wood. For now, a small sample to test quality was all I wanted. When I spotted a likely candidate, I cut away a small triangle of bark from its base. Heavy bark, at least an eighth of an inch thick, is best. I bent the sample gently between my fingers, and rejected it when it split easily or separated into layers. If resilience was adequate, I walked around the tree several times, making a visual check for "eyes," the imperfections that occur when lower branches grow through the bark and then die off from overshadowing. Big eyes weaken the bark and require patching during canoe construction. Piecing out the hull with several sheets of bark was common practice for large canoes. Mine was going to be fairly short, and I wanted to avoid underwater seams by using one large sheet.

After the bark skin, northern white cedar (*Thuja arborvitae*) is the most important raw material. The Indians called it *Oo-soo-ha-tah*, meaning "feather leaf." It is the legendary wood of canoe builders. Most of the woodwork—ribs, planks, gunwales, and stems—may be carved from it. Every book on canoe building lauds its value. It is lightweight, resistant to rot, easily split into thin slats. Although not strong, it is reasonably stiff.

I still had cedar on the brain and planned to exhaust every possibility. The only cedar I found in abundance was Eastern red cedar. Its aromatic wood is a popular lining for chests, as moths dislike the aroma. There were large, straight trees on my old partridge ridges. I found a dead trunk that was weather-split, pried off a sizable section and dragged it home. The wood was strong and twice as heavy as white cedar. Scores of little knots made controlled splitting impossible.

I reread the passage on cedar in one of my Indian how-to books. It told everything about this wonderful wood, then concluded by mentioning that other woods were substituted where it was unavailable. I was becoming furious with the writer! What other woods? My annoyance evaporated as I considered that he hadn't harvested the materials he was describing. He might have seen a canoe under construction. Very possibly he had only heard a description or, worse yet, read it somewhere else. At last it dawned

on me that no living writer or speaker had ever built or remembered seeing anyone else build a birch canoe with Stone Age tools. In this pursuit I was alone. Somewhere, sometime, some primitive boat builders had come up with the design, materials, and methods for creating the birchbark canoe. There was no tradition that dictated their choices. Right now, I found myself in their same position.

Black ash, nicknamed "basket ash," caught my eye. Its unusual qualities are a result of the spongy springwood pores. This thin layer between summer growths is easily crushed by pounding on the log. Afterward, the outermost layer separates along the annular growth ring. Black ash, the author said, grew in swamps all over New England. I had never seen a specimen. The book was kind enough to suggest white ash, hickory, and oak as stronger alternatives, although they required more pounding for separation.

There was a good stand of white ash back in the meadows. I picked a big standing tree and removed the outer bark on one side. The light yellow sapwood was wet and shiny. I beat up and down a narrow width using a hickory club that looked like something out of the "Flintstones" cartoon. After cutting through this layer at the upper end, I began prying with a flat rib bone. The splint came free readily enough, but the grain was fractured and limp from the beating. The next layer inward appeared drier and less active. I pounded again, cut and pried. The splint came away intact. Although twice as heavy as cedar, it was much stronger. The considerable labor it took to produce a few trial ribs bore no resemblance to the jest about carving a toothpick from a redwood tree. The slats were smooth and uniform, a near-finished product that had real potential for canoe ribs.

The ash held further promise for gunwale members, as it is famous for easy splitting when green. I thought I had passed many saplings that were straight and knot-free, an important requirement with stone and wooden wedges.

## Gather

I walked back to my birch grove, armed with three tools: leaf knife, stone axe, and a thin ash splint. The first canoe tree was large, fifteen inches in diameter. Felling it with the axe was out of the question. Fire, in fact, was the only effective tool primitives possessed for heavy tree work, but it would ruin the bark. The alternative was to take bark from a standing tree using a ladder.

Building a ladder on the spot was the axe's only duty. I felled three ash saplings, stripped their slippery bark, and laid two of them out to form an elongated V. These were the legs, crisscrossed at the top. After splitting the third sapling lengthwise, I chopped it into rungs of decreasing length and notched the legs to receive them. The ladder was ready as soon as the pieces were bound together with their own bark. It trembled as I raised it against the birch.

The stone knife accomplished the next task. Starting near the ground, I sawed a vertical groove through the bark up the trunk's full height. This work went smoothly.

The last step, prying the bark free, was the most delicate and toilsome. There is no better tool than a flat, flexible stick sharpened to chisel shape at one end. Working carefully, I pried the edge of the cut to lift away the

bark. Unlike the skin of most other trees, birchbark grain runs around the circumference and is prone to splitting during this first operation.

The material gives but can be forced only so fast and far. After working about two inches under the cut I moved up the trunk to do the same. The crisscrossed legs of the ladder formed a little V at the top, which gripped the tree trunk securely without getting in the way of the work—unwitting luck. I climbed again, working the trunk around, an inch at a time. An occasional tight spot required special care to avoid splits.

The quarter on either side of the saw cut was easiest. The back half of



ASH SAPLING LADDER



the birch was harder to reach, with the curling edges of the free bark somewhat in the way. I wet the splint and bent it into an arc approximating the trunk's curvature. This helped.

It was fairly comfortable working in the same forest shade that had forced this birch to grow straight in the first place. Beams of sunlight pierced the canopy at new angles, lighting different patches of the ferns below. Most of the afternoon was gone by the time I had cleared the bark around the tree base. With new enthusiasm I worked upward, splint around one side, fingertips on the other. I supported the sheet's full weight with one hand as the last patch of bark broke free. The bark flopped accordion-like on the ground as I climbed down.

I spread it out for inspection. The single major eye was unbroken and smooth on the inside. I had accidentally caused a foot-deep split in the upper third. With proper positioning it might be above the finished canoe's waterline. Overall, the sheet looked satisfactory. I rolled it lengthwise, tied it to the ladder, and dragged the assembly out of the forest like a travois. I looked back to see the glistening orange trunk of the stripped birch tree. It would soon die for its contribution to my canoe.

The next week I harvested a second birch roll, as even a small canoe can seldom be covered by one tree. I weighted them both with stones and sunk them in my neighbor's farm pond to prevent them from drying out. The precious bark was now safe.

I needed a heavier stone axe before I could harvest gunwales. The use of a tool often dictates the manner and material of its making. Because flint is brittle, the tooling can be accomplished with percussive blows alone. Likewise, percussive use is avoided except when taking advantage of flint's superior piercing qualities. Thus Stone Age hunters were constantly replacing broken javelin and arrow points. An axe, on the other hand, is always used percussively, hence one selects stone that resists shattering.

Unlike flint, stone for axes is not rare in Connecticut. Basalt is a very good material. Most people have seen it as crushed traprock, used for road paving. Coming from the deep earth by volcanic intrusion, it is hard, dark gray, and heavier than the granite that forms the continental masses.

I squatted over a rubble pile, picking my way through hundreds of pieces. Within an hour I had selected half a dozen promising blanks. One in particular was extremely graceful, a foot long and nearly rectangular in cross section. It was half as thick as it was wide—a good proportion for strength. The taper was just right.

Two abrasive techniques, called pecking and grinding, are employed, in that order. A good pecking stone is harder than the axe material. Fist-sized cobbles of quartz serve nicely. The axe blank is held in the left hand. With a loose right hand, the cobble is rapped against the axe in a quick series of little blows, like a miniature jackhammer. Fine dust appears as the basalt surface crumbles away ever so slightly. With enough pecks the cobble cracks minutely, exposing new, sharp crystals.

After several afternoons were thus whiled away, the axe blade had thinned to the point where further pecking might destroy it. The remaining material had to be removed by grinding. The grindstone was a slab of tight-grained sandstone I picked up on some foraging trip. It was a simple job to rub the axe across it at the angle of the finished edge. Boring. I turned the axe head over and did a little on the reverse side. Progress was nearly imperceptible, not unlike watching the tide come in.

My next task was to decide on the canoe's dimensions. Native canoe styles varied tremendously. Within a given tribal group, one type was usually produced. Its profile, hull form, and treatment of the ends were characteristic. What did vary was the size of individual canoes. Records exist of traditional historic builders using measuring sticks with carved notches. Obtaining correct proportions once the length was set could have been as simple as doing what was done the last time. Since this was my first time around, I decided to work on the gunwale and thwart assembly while I was laying out the bark, so as to ensure a fit.

The better bark roll had a twelve-foot running length with a single major flaw, which could be patched. Thirteen feet or so sounded like a sufficient gunwale length. I needed four good rails, since the gunwales are assembled in pairs—an inwale and outwale on each side of the canoe. Economy called for the thinnest, straightest ash I could find without branches below the thirteen-foot mark.

I located my tree after a considerable walk and struck the first axe blow about noon. A little chip of bark flew off and exposed a thin sliver of yellow-green sapwood. The idea of walking out with split gunwales seemed ridiculously remote. This was no giant tree, but with a five-inch diameter, it was near the limits of Stone Age capability. I chopped away, one chip at a time. The fog had cleared by the time the ash fell, well over an hour later. Parting the trunk from the crown went faster. After chopping halfway through, I muscled the trunk onto a convenient boulder and jumped on the free end. A crack began to spread down the trunk's center. I chopped away some small branches, tapered them, and drove them into the crack. It drifted off center a bit, but it didn't matter as the butt end had wood to spare. This was the most difficult split, for the full log was awkward to maneuver. Controlling the quartering splits was easier. A few simple tricks made splitting more predictable. It was safest to start from the small end of the tree. Knots were easier to pass and tended to veer the crack back on center. When the split did drift off, bending the thicker side between two standing saplings helped to correct the error. As the crack lengthened, the stressed wood fibers began breaking away to the thinner side.

The little caches of material tucked away in corners of the backyard were growing. Birch bark and split ash, the essential items, were stockpiled in quantity. I needed more ash splint ribs, but that was just a matter of more pounding. There were other outstanding odds and ends, a few needs still unidentified.

White pine roots had to be prepared before I could begin stitching the birch bark together. Once again memories of former wanderings led me back to a sandy hillside, reforested exclusively with pines. Digging was easy. I spent a day collecting one hundred feet of root, some as thin as twine, others as thick as my finger.

I wouldn't need pine pitch until much later, but it was worth prospecting for it while among the pines. A book suggested blazing tree trunks with an axe and collecting the oozing sap with a flat stick. The few drops I was able to collect hardly moistened the stick, even in the heat of late July. There had to be a better way. I hoped I would discover it in time.

## Build

THE DESIGN PARALLEL between birch canoes and the wood-canvas variety is interesting and somewhat surprising. Superficially, the two might appear alike, except for the substitution of sheathing material and the use of nails and modern sealants. The analogous parts do occupy similar positions, but they play against one another to produce strength and rigidity in different ways. A canvas canoe is begun from the inside, with the ribs spaced along a building form. The lengthwise planks are fitted over them, edge to edge, and nailed to them. With the addition of gunwales, stem pieces, and thwarts, the hull shape is completely determined. Canvas is stretched over the hull and sealant applied to the porous cloth. The sheathing operation is the last step.

The Indian canoe is built from the outside in. It begins with the white birch sheath. The strategy of construction is different. The bark, held to form with stakes driven into the ground, is stitched into a large, canoe-shaped bag. Gunwale pairs are lashed in place, pinching the bark's upper edge, as are the curved stem pieces at each end. Thin planks lining the bark hull float between the bark and the ribs, distributing the latter's pressure. The ribs are forced in over the planks, their tips held under the beveled inwale by friction alone. Countertension set up between the gunwales, ribs, and bark keeps the structure stiff and tight as a drum. The scheme is simple, clever, and elegant.

The lower backyard became the official building site. It was well-shaded for the comfort of the builder and benefit of the green materials, especially the bark.

I cleared a flat stretch for the building bed and centered the false frame there. This construction was canoe-shaped, but a little shorter and narrower. It was easily made from two of the inferior ash rails, spread with three cross struts. Although not a part of the finished canoe, it would hold the bottom area flat and define the turn of the bilge. When the hull was finished, I would sever the basswood bark lashings securing the frame and discard the pieces.



With the main gunwale-thwart assembly centered and suspended on stakes above the false frame, the preliminary layout was in place. I pounded eight long stakes—split one-inch saplings—into the ground along each side, their lower ends just outside the false frame, upper ends touching a gunwale as they ran past it. It looked like a series of Vs with their bottom halves cut off below ground. The bilge would turn sharply and the sides remain flat along the stakes while the bark remained on the bed. Later, when the ribs are added, the bark stretches tightly and follows the rib curvature. I removed the suspended gunwales and stowed them away. The present aim was to get the bark sheet under the false frame and bent up inside the stakes, which meant dismantling everything and starting once again from the flat earth.

I turned the bark's white side up and replaced the false frame, weighting it heavily with stones. A flat bark sheet must be cut, or gored, before it can be bent up around the football-shaped frame. Locating the gores requires good judgment. The large tear I made accidentally during harvesting would serve as a natural one. Other weak spots were likely candidates. There is no preset number but they should be close enough that the bark follows the frame smoothly when it is all turned up. As this was done for each section, I replaced the stakes in their original holes outside the bark and added companion stakes opposite them on the inside. With pairs of stakes tied together at the top, the bark was effectively pinched in place. It was beginning to look like a canoe.

I had found a book with photographs of Indians building a canoe somewhere in Canada during the 1930s. The first two plates showed men laying out the bark and frame. The third showed a woman with her children, industriously stitching up the numerous gores with split evergreen roots. Apparently the men never got involved in such laborious tasks. I pondered this briefly; no, I didn't dare ask.

The coiled-up roots had been soaking in anticipation of this next step. Debarking them is a simple matter of pulling each through the split in a green stick. Sewing is done with half roots, roots split lengthwise. A fingernail is sufficient to start the split at the small end, after which it is always pulled apart by hand. Roots about three feet long and one-eighth inch thick were convenient. The roots are supple but sufficiently stiff that they require no needle for sewing. I sharpened the root tip with one of the stray flint flakes littering the yard. Now all I needed was something to poke holes in the bark.

With a graver—a square-edged flint flake—I scratched an elongated S-curve down the middle of an animal's leg bone. When it was worn through to the marrow, I turned the bone over and did it again. When the second groove broke through, there were two awls in my lap. The natural end bulbs of the original bone made comfortable handles, each with its own tip from either side of the S-groove. A little sharpening on the sandstone grinder and it was ready by afternoon.

The edges of the gores overlap slightly as the bark is turned up along the curved false frame. This extra bark makes for a stronger joint, but the overlap must be taken toward the stern so that the joints will not rip open when the canoe passes over rocks.

Good bark is resilient, almost spongy. I poked through it with the triangular awl and gave a quarter turn. The tapered root tip slipped through easily. I poked a hole on the other side of the gore, threaded the root there and pulled tight until its flat split side lay hard against the bark. The half-round outer side gave a smooth, finished appearance—such beautiful materials to work with! The holes closed back on the root stitches, holding them snugly in place. The combination wasn't waterproof but I could see that would be easy to achieve with a little pine pitch. The first few stitches were a fascinating experience. The thrill wore off by the time I worked up the first gore. There were eleven more to sew. At least it wasn't so tedious as grinding the stone axe. And each completed stitch was a discrete unit of accomplishment.

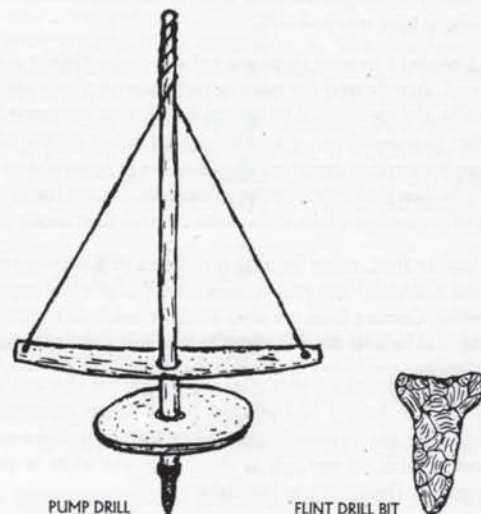
There was really no way to rush this work, so I didn't. The trick was to avoid getting locked into hourly, daily, or even weekly schedules that demanded deadlines for specific pieces of work. The resulting freedom was constrained only by the changing seasons—unequivocal deadlines for which no extensions are granted. It was now August. I would stitch and sew bark intermittently until fall.

Working solo, I moved through a varied spectrum of tasks. When I wasn't stitching, I worked on the gunwales. The ash rails needed trimming and tapering toward the ends. While still green, the wood works down easily

with a stone axe. Once the rails were near size, I planed them with sharp flint flakes. These were not specialized tools, merely conveniently sized pieces from the waste heap. All of this debitage, as archaeologists call it, was the result of finishing the large trade blanks I had brought back from the Hudson Valley flint mine. When a flake dulled or broke, I returned it to the pile for future service in some other capacity. This recycling of resources must have been part of primitive technologies as well.

The most difficult woodworking project was cutting the mortise holes through the inwales. These holes receive the matching tenon surfaces at the tip of the cross thwarts. The mortise and tenon is a particularly strong joint and appropriately used here. Although one never sits on the thwarts when paddling a birch canoe, they are subjected to considerable stress during portaging, especially the main or center thwart.

Drilling is the basic shaping process. I set aside several days to experiment with techniques. The simplest drill is a pointed stone, something like an arrowhead, held in the hand and twisted back and forth with wrist action; simple but slow. Efficiency takes an upward leap when the drill bit is tied to an arrow-like shaft that is spun between the palms. Considerable power is gained by attaching a stone flywheel near the bottom of the shaft and driving it with a cord attached to a perpendicular crosspiece. As the



crosspiece is pumped up and down, the cord winds and unwinds about the vertical shaft, spinning it first in one direction, then the other, while the flywheel's momentum rotates the drill through the end of each stroke. The pump drill must have been a major breakthrough when it first appeared. Something about it bothered me, though. It had five parts, very complex compared with the two-piece palm-driven drill. As I experimented with my new toy, I discovered that it was possible to control the force and speed by pressing the crossbar more forcefully during different points in the stroke. It was truly a variable-speed, variable-torque device, just like the drill in the Black & Decker ads—no cord or batteries needed, however. I decided it offered an acceptable balance between complexity and versatility.

A flint drill bit must be tapered toward the tip; otherwise it tends to snap off as the drill hole deepens. Of course, it cuts a tapered hole, and the drill begins to bind before it is very deep. Simple solution: turn the work over, drill from the other side, and hope the two holes line up. They never do exactly, making it easy for archaeologists to recognize primitive drilling techniques.

For my mortise joint I drilled two opposing pairs of holes an inch apart on each side of the rail, and chipped out the wood with a bone chisel. Sawing and scraping with a thin flint knife neaten up the edges. The finished mortise was roughly oval. Large canoes often have five thwarts. Mine would use three, or six mortises. I never completed more than one on a given day. They didn't match in size, either. But the tenons at the thwart ends were much easier to carve, and I planned to save the fitup for that step.

The gores were sewn. It was late summer; staghorn sumac berries were ripe. Their tangy brew became standard refreshment during long quiet afternoons in the lower yard.



From the start it was obvious that the bark sheet was too narrow to reach the gunwales at the wider midships section. This was usually the case and required the addition of a long, crescent-shaped piece to make up the shortfall. Like the gores, it was stitched in place. Stitching and more stitching—the task became subconscious. The finished patchwork was pleasing to the eye, a unity of beauty and function.

The curved stem pieces were surprisingly easy to make. Each required a two-foot length of ash sapling about an inch and a half in diameter. After flattening each side a little, I bound one end with a bark cord and split the other into four parallel slats. One at a time I bent them to the required curve. The cord kept the foot of the stem from splitting. When the contour looked right, I bound the slats together with a strip of basswood bark and staked them out to season.

All through the summer I visited the big ash tree, pounding off a few slats each time. There is no more intimate way to become acquainted with a tree's life history than to disassemble it in reverse order, a year at a time. Some slats were thin, a sixteenth of an inch or less. At ten years before present I encountered a heavy layer more than an eighth of an inch thick. It was what I had counted on for the long center ribs. Perhaps that was the year the ash penetrated the leaf canopy to become a dominant monarch of the woodlot.

The little pile of ash splints was growing, but I needed many more. I continued holding to the presumption that this was a sensible way to manufacture canoe ribs.

I returned to the sandy, pine-studded hillside to dig another hundred feet of root for lashing the gunwales. They were thick, about the size of a pencil when stripped of bark.

After sandwiching an inwale-outwale combination along either side of the canoe, I trimmed bark, leaving an inch-high flap. The root stitches are taken through the bark just under the gunwales, over them and back under again, two turns through each awl hole. This spaces the holes so that the bark isn't severely weakened. Much of the holding power comes from the squeezing of the gunwale pair as the lashings are drawn tight. For good measure, I folded the little extra flap of bark down on top of the gunwales before sewing the overstitches. After six turns or so, a space must be skipped where the ribs will meet the inwales. The alternate schedule of lashings and spaces made an attractive pattern. As I reached the cross thwarts, I passed two turns of heavy root through holes near their ends, pulling their tenon joints tightly into the gunwale mortises.

Only the ends of the canoe remained open. Soon I would lash the stem pieces between the flaps of bark at bow and stern, closing the hull.

Peach and crimson leaves filled the inside of the canoe, hiding the stones weighting the false frame. The cacophony of southbound geese overhead punctuated the message: summer was gone.

I unloaded the cargo of leaves and stones and cut loose the false frame. A few thin ash splints wedged inside were sufficient to keep the bark bag stretched to shape. I overturned it against the coming winter and directed my thoughts to other projects.

## Winter Work

There was still much to be done. I was really in the mood to be back outdoors, working in the lower yard. I thought of next spring. Several details about ribbing and pitching were still unclear. As I tried to work through the steps mentally, I came up with an idea. Henri Vaillancourt was probably in New Hampshire, locked in his own workshop, wishing he could be outside, too. Why not give him a call and get expert advice? I had already sent him a picture of the stone tools and a note about my plans.

He answered on the second ring, a mild voice, well spoken but slightly aloof. I wasn't totally unprepared for this. After all, he was the white rediscoverer of the Indian birch canoe while I was an unknown with a fetish for stone and bone. He did remember the stone tool pictures: "Yes, they looked . . . sort of primitive." That was the idea, I thought to myself. I asked him about the cross-stitching on the stem pieces.

"Don't you have Adney's book? He shows that clearly in the section on root lashings."

"No." I had heard of the work but never acquired it, deliberately. I tried to explain that discovery was a part of my process. "The stem pieces are stitched in but I just wanted to check."

"I can't imagine building a canoe without Adney's book." My approach obviously hadn't made headway with him. "Where did you say you lived, anyway?"

"Central Connecticut, roughly."

"You won't find birch trees big enough for a canoe down there!"

"I already have the birch. I finished sewing the hull before Thanksgiving. What I'm really concerned about is the ribs. There's no white cedar down here. I've been harvesting white ash splints, the kind basket makers use. I hope they'll do for ribs."

"White ash? It doesn't sound like a very satisfactory material to me. Try something like basswood." Henri's voice was emphatic, convincing. I didn't want to give up the ash rib idea but let it go for the moment. I had many more questions, and none of the foregoing stopped him from being genuinely helpful.

"How thick is the bark you use to back up the gore seams?" I asked.

"You can use thin bark but it's apt to split. I use cheesecloth."

"Can you suggest a rustic substitute?"

"A thin hide would do: even deer isn't too thick," he suggested.

"Does it need to be dehaired and tanned? I'll be starting with green hides." He stopped to think—a modern canoe maker didn't need to consider such problems.

Before the call I had expected to come away exultant, with new information and confidence about my project. Instead, my feelings were unsettled, and it was difficult to say why. We hadn't disagreed over anything. He had given me seasoned advice about sealing the canoe and several other items. But he discredited the ash splint ribs, and I thought I'd been so clever to think of it. He appeared impatient with my primitive tools. He even pooh-poohed Connecticut as too far south for good birch. Yet his expertise was impressive, and everything I had heard about his status as a canoe builder was apparently fact. I respected him even more as a true professional to whom craftsmanship was paramount. And this is probably where we diverged a bit. For me, a canoe was the necessary vehicle for entering a lost world. My canoe didn't have to be perfect. Henri's did, and he was willing to make adjustments to obtain that result. Unlike him, I intended to adhere to my primitive ways no matter how poor the product. Our differences didn't involve lack of love for birch canoes, just point of view.

## Spring Building

The canoe emerged from its winter cocoon in good shape. I inspected the seams and weak spots that required sealing. It was too cold to work with pitch yet, but I planned to back the stitched gores with hide, as Henri had suggested. Raccoon pelts were easy to come by this time of year. I repeated the tanning work I had done for the hide bags.

My meager supply of pitch from blazing trees had been expended sealing the mocucks. Until I could find a lot more, I wouldn't get very far. I sat in a pine grove to ponder the problem. The snow was gone but the ground was damp from the combined thaw and runoff of new rains. How had the trees reacted when I blazed their trunks last August? The sap ran to heal the wound, just like blood when I cut myself. Then the flow stopped. Cutting deeper into the heartwood with stone tools was difficult without cutting halfway through the tree and destroying it. As I sat up, the back of my jacket stuck to the tree trunk I had been leaning against. I turned around, then looked up to see all the pitch a canoe maker needed: fist-sized globs adhered to the surface of the trunk, most of them just below branches that had suffered winter damage. Some of these spots appeared to be a few years old. The pitch was still good, although needles, bark chips, and windblown dirt had collected on its sticky surface. I'd have to come up with a simple way to purify it. The more active spots had been bleeding hard enough already to spatter the lower trunk of the tree. Some climbing and a flat stick was all it took to collect the globs; in two afternoons I found more than enough.

When the weather warmed, I built a tar run—a flat rock with a slightly hollowed surface, set on stones to make a shallow incline. The globs of raw pitch went on the high end. A slow fire was burning underneath. I set up three little dams of pebbles across the creeping stream of melting pitch. The impurities hung up behind the pebbles, and the pure sap dripped off the low end of the rock into a clay dish.



Evergreen pitch is highly waterproof. After being boiled, it cools to a smooth, adherent glaze. Its major shortcoming is sensitivity to temperature change. On a spring day it may be strong and firm to the touch. The same material will crack under stress during winter, and turn stickier than bubblegum in the summer sun.

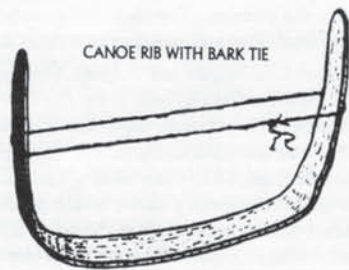
One needs to know the operating conditions of his pitched seams, that is, whether he is building a warm-water or cold-water canoe. Mine would be moderately warm. The books insisted on adding a little powered charcoal to the pitch, though none explained why. The really important additive is animal fat. How much is best determined by experiment. I waited for a mild day, heated the mixture, and spread a little on a piece of test bark. When it cooled, I bent the bark gently. The pitch cracked. I added more fat and repeated the test. One mixture was soft to the touch; I boiled off some fat until it cooled firm.

A flat stick is the most effective pitch applicator. By the time hot material is smeared on a joint, the pitch has cooled too much to run deeply into crevices or adhere tightly. Reheating in place is necessary. A green twig with a little roll of flaming birch bark stuck in the split end is the standard torch. I rolled up the raccoon hide strips. Beginning at the bottom of an inside seam, I slowly unrolled the hide, pressing it into the hot pitch as I flamed my way up the gore. This was a delicate operation, as both pitch and bark hull are very flammable. I was starting to get good at it by the time I finished all twelve gores. After ribbing, both outside stem surfaces receive a similar pitch-and-hide treatment. The outside of each gore is coated with pitch alone.

By now I had a considerable pile of white ash slats. I resorted them into two stacks. Those about a sixteenth of an inch thick would line the canoe interior lengthwise, as planks. Most pieces were about six feet long, so I would need two sets of slats, each pair to be overlapped amidships. The thicker, stiffer slats would become ribs.

The final hull shape is a push-pull compromise between rib curvature and the amount of slack in the bark bottom. Bending these annular-ring slats was easier than bending split-out wood, as there was absolutely no cross grain to work against. But hot water makes any bending easier. I stood a single rib on end in a seamless bark dish and poured hot water along its length from a clay pot, then exchanged containers to repeat. The bends should occur roughly where the false frame set the limits of the flat bark bottom. I determined these spots visually. With my thumbs as markers, I placed the rib on the ground, stepped just inside my thumbs and pulled up on the free ends. Cedar ribs are usually bent in pairs to support each other against cracking. This wasn't necessary with the ash as long as I pulled up slowly. When half a dozen ribs were thus bent, I nested them together and constrained the ends from springing back with a basswood bark tie.

I couldn't wait through all of the bending to trial fit a few ribs. Pushing a bent rib snugly into position in the canoe, I now sighted where the rib legs passed the inwales. I cut them slightly long and rounded the tips on a slab of sandstone. Single ribs are set into the canoe at an angle to their finished vertical position, tips catching the beveled surface under the inwale. As



the rib is pushed upright, its web touches the canoe bottom. It must be driven the last distance with a wooden mallet, expanding the hull to its tightly finished form. If the ribs are overlong, there is a danger that the hull will split from too much expansion, so some trimming is often needed. Hot water dribbled along the gunwales makes the root lashings and bark more pliable, lessening the danger.

The trial fitup looked good and I returned to bending ribs. But before I was through, my last clay pot cracked and slumped into the fire. The interdependence between every link of my technology chain was indeed crucial. I had no choice but to suspend work on the canoe and begin making pottery.

The term *trial by fire* is especially fitting for primitive ceramics. My first vessel blew up during firing. I sifted through the ashes, disappointed. The pot itself would never have passed for an authentic Indian replica, but the broken shards looked amazingly like those I found along the riverbanks a half-mile away. Obviously, I was using the same material and methods as those primitive potters. They could have worked the same seam of clay, on this same spot. But it dawned on me that they would have been women, not men.

My own building and firing techniques improved quickly. The books told how squaws added a third part of rottenstone to temper their clay. What was rottenstone? Experiment once again. A cobble that broke easily into sharp grit provided particles to hold the clay paste together during drying and firing. I preheated the pots around a bonfire before overturning them onto the ashes, then covered them with rotten wood and bark. They began to emerge from the firing in one piece. Encouraged, I started to model my wares along traditional Algonquin lines.



LARGE CLAY POT FOR BENDING RIBS

## Sea Trials

THE CANOE RIBS were lying in order on the lawn; they looked like the skeletal remains of a beached whale. Everything else was ready: planks lining the canoe held in place with a few false ribs; root lashings wetted down for flexibility; more water simmering on the fire in new clay pots. I had previously made a trial fit with each rib, trimming the ends where necessary, so that the rib driving could go forward with minimal interruption.

Work proceeds equally from both stem pieces. Two deeply V-sectioned ribs are placed at the first break between gunwale lashings, their tips under the inwales. Their webs tilt back toward the center of the canoe, even after they have been pushed snugly in place. Two more ribs are added at the next lashing break, one at each end. Once they are also hand-snug, the first pair is then driven a bit farther with a mallet. Rib pairs are added and driven alternately, those farthest from the center becoming vertical first. It is like watching a movie of falling dominoes played backward very, very slowly. Intermittent dribbling with hot water, careful driving, and plenty of time to allow the bark to stretch tight are all equally important.

There were only a few chores left. The outside seams were pitched, and I just had to check for leaks. The easiest way is to suspend the canoe from two trees with ropes and pour an inch or two of water inside. It's never leakproof the first time. A piece of charcoal is used to mark each drip, and after drying, the spots are touched up with fresh pitch. Several such cycles may be necessary.

The canoe was in the pond. I steadied one hand on each gunwale, trying to get a feel for how it would react to my full weight. I knelt on the bank, and brought my right foot in behind the main thwart. The canoe was vibrant with buoyancy. As I swung the other foot over, it heeled suddenly then settled, still upright. I moved tentatively, pushing out into the pond. No gurgling noises behind me. My knees were still dry; not a drop of water inside. The canoe moved easily, responding to every little gesture from the paddle. I came about, exultant, and thrust the paddle deeply.

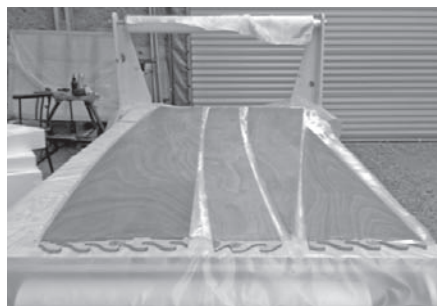
"It floats!"



I have had an interest in a plywood construction/epoxy fiberglass motor runabout to work on my boat building skills. The boat needed to be able to be rowed, be lightweight and have a good line with room for two. Off Center Harbor has a video with Leif Knutsen demonstrating the Salish Canoe, it interested me because of the simplicity and the heritage. Then I contacted the designer/shipwright Leif Knutsen and he sent me some construction pictures of the two he had built. We began discussions of purchasing rights to build the canoe and the purchase of the CNC panels from another source. The pictures showed a way of building the canoe by myself that intrigued me but required a few modifications to my usual way of building boats. I used this excuse to go to the Port Townsend boat show last year and test drove the canoe, an excellent time.

To start I needed to gear up, as it were, and the first was a rolling fiberglass "pre preg" bench, see picture, rolling for me, not for Leif, because right now my shop locations are in flux and I want the bench right beside me at this point but it needs to go a ways away when real assembly starts. As well as staging for the fiberglassing of the panels, the rolling bench is the place that I "pre preg" the biaxial tape for the puzzle joints and the taped seams of the assembly procedure.

Each of the three strakes per side comes as a cut panel with puzzle joints from the CNC machine in an 8'x6"x24" box, laid out on the platform bench detailed below and joined on both sides. There is pre stress built in per the drawings, and epoxied, in my case, with 4" tri axial tape on inside and 4" bi axial tape on the outside on the joint. Leif used 40z cloth which held up just fine, Leif wants a light boat, me, too, but if it is worth building it is worth over building. The pre fiberglassing of the inside of the panels makes a lot of sense, it is easy and simple on the flat on the table and I can trim the glass fall off and finish with a surform rasp to get ready to epoxy the edge to seal before assembly.



Rolling pre-preg bench.

The picture shows a fiberglass gantry holding the roll so as I am prepping the inside of unassembled panels (an excellent idea as it turns out). I can pull off the glass after pre impregnating the panel and lay down the glass evenly so as not to build lumps and air pockets as I go along, later wetting out the glass. I hold the epoxy and cloth back from the puzzle joints, but not too far so I can tie them in when I epoxy the joint. Under the bench are suspended rolls of triaxial and biaxial tape and a roll of peelply (another excellent idea) which limits sanding, always a good thing. Also, another Leif idea is the roll of plastic at the end of the bench so I can occasionally replace the covering of the bench when it is used up or cut during trimming of the panels.

## Just Build the Boat Why Don't Ya !!



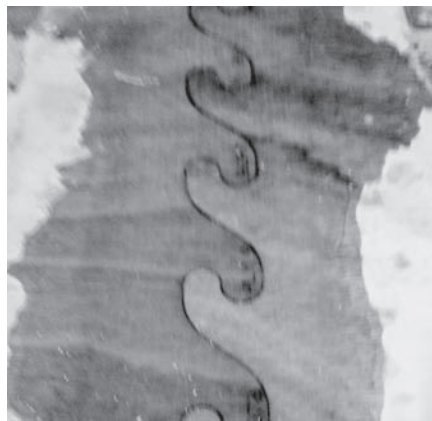
Mia, a completed Salish canoe.



Side panels, note puzzle joints.

The picture of the long platform bench starts with some strong sawhorses I built with a short dimension. The horses are leveled with a laser and staked into the ground with steel form stakes. The TJI truss is attached to the horses with hurricane clips and ripped 2"x6" big box dimensional lumber screwed to the TJI every 16". Since the canoe would be built right side up and without a strong-back, it was important to have a stable cradle/platform that would stay in place and support the build. As I got to the assembly of the last strake, the bench required an even longer dimension to support the ends of the plywood, so one more horse and level extension was added so the pre tensioning of the strake per the drawings was achieved. After the two upper strakes were complete, I removed the extension. Now to start assembly with the station molds provided and rocker cradle forms secured to the bench at station molds. More to come.

Good News puzzle joint.



Fishing line straight edge alignment.

### Building Skin-on-Frame Double Paddle Canoes



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It was absolutely without question the best, worst boat that I've owned. That's right, I'll admit it. I owned a true blue, genuine, official, 15' Grumman aluminum Sport Boat. She was just like Robb White's *Chickenfeed*, except my boat was named *T.H.E. Scow* and was the new style that had a flotation collar inside the gunnels and was made of the modern lightweight extra thin aluminum.



Flotation collar along gunnel.

She got her name out of respect for the Star Trek TV episode where Scotty got in a fight with the Klingons because they called the *Enterprise* a garbage scow. The sport boat was my garbage scow and, although it deeply disappointed me, she didn't evoke a fight, she was a polarizing boat and it was only a matter of time.

I got interested in such a contraption as I wanted to get back into boating after a bit of an upheaval in my life. It was just after the Katrina catastrophe and gas prices were nuts. So I drove a four cylinder compact car which set a hard limit to the size of boat I could easily tow. I also wanted something I could afford to effortlessly gas up for 30, no make it 40, excursions a year without pump prices kneeing me hard in the wallet.

I've always had a soft spot in my heart for Grumman products as the first boat I owned was a 17' standard Grumman canoe, which was an exceptional craft. And that's where I started my search. I took a leap in faith and browsed a new internet site at the time called craigslist. I didn't even know what a Sport Boat was but I was thinking a square stern rig would be just the ticket to solve my new boating itch. Anything with the Grumman name would be a bonus.

And what do you know, I found the search to be productive. They weren't all over the place but they were out there and I found a used package with a 4hp Yamaha four stroke outboard and substantial galvanized trailer, all in newish condition. I dug into Sport Boats a little deeper and found the Grumman models basically started out as their monstrous 19' canoes, with 4' cut off the aft end, to make them square stern units. As a result of their design they had a broader rear end than a standard square stern canoe. Their heritage made them a boat/canoe, labradoodle/cockapoo sort of mixed hybrid cross-breed beafalo'd GMO mongrelized Frankencruising brocruiser of the first order.

I learned they could be rowed, sailed, paddled like a canoe or kayak and that big wide transom was just the ticket to firmly support a small motor. What's not to like about that? It appealed to me to have all the bases covered. When I learned earlier versions were chucked out of airplanes for commandos to cross rivers in Germany during the big one, the hook was set. I got so excited about owning one I actually paid the full asking price without hesitation. Oops, I wish I didn't tell you that.

## T.H.E Scow

By Johnny Mack



Sport Boat setup.

I remember buying her on April 1 and couldn't wait to try her out. The next day I immediately took her for a shakedown cruise at Marshfield Reservoir. Many people had a good laugh at my expense when I pulled into the parking lot only to find the lake still covered with a solid layer of ice. Seems April 2 is a little too early for pleasure cruising on Marshfield.

I used the next couple of weeks to rig her up. Without knowing what I was getting into, I pulled a **Dan Rogers** on her and did a full scale **Dave Lucas**. I did something you don't see on Sport Boats a lot so I was sure I was going to get **Baggywinkled** and taken to task by the **Journals of Constant Waterman** for being so far gone **From the Lee Rail** that it would **Shiver Me Timbers** and I would be immortalized in the **Editor's Commentary** and realized a life long dream of getting laid out **Over The Horizon** in the coveted "Pirate" section, almost like I was book reviewed. That's right, in true *MAIB* fashion I wired her stem to stern with horn, bow light, anchor light, fish finder with transom mounted transducer and an electric bilge pump. I then clamped on a couple of rod holders, a nicely padded helm seat with a backrest and outriggers. Yes, I said it, outriggers.

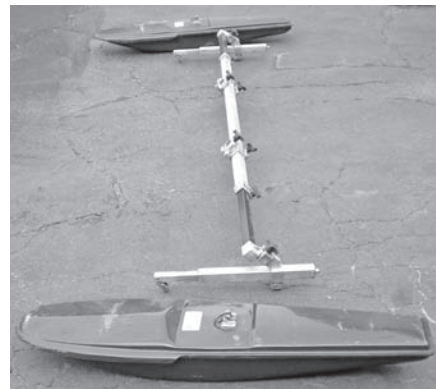


Transducer installation.

This was also my first effort at buying and selling for fun and profit and, although it got a little crazy, it worked out. When I picked up my Sport Boat I was a little unsure of her condition so I hedged my bet by also targeting a 17' Grumman Standard Square back canoe that was in the area. I found the canoe to be in decent shape and it came with a pair of Neilsen's Canoe Outriggers. I wanted something to make the Sport Boat more stable so I could stand up, move around

and fish. I knew canoes were a little weak in that department. Killing two birds with one stone, the outriggers appealed to me as a way to solve that problem.

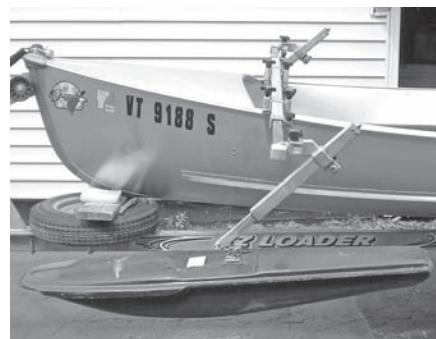
I researched a lot of methods to accomplish this and saw many positive references to the Nielsen product. It seemed like a good way to do it when I realized I could sell the canoe for a profit and could keep the pontoons as a free bonus. Sometimes it is hard to go wrong when you buy a boat in the off season!



Nielsen outrigger attachment.

The pontoons and mounting bracket were infinitely adjustable and were built like a Russian shot putter, you know, the really big strong ones, the women. But there was a problem. The good people at Grumman caved in to what must have been government standards (or common sense) and added flotation to the boats by riveting foam filled aluminum sleeves down the entire boat inside the gunnels.

These limited where I could clamp on the outriggers but I hated to do the surgery to remove the flotation. That is because I was a mere fledgling on modifying aluminum boats at this point (it was my first project) and I hated to cut anything away that might get me arrested for boat abuse. I also remembered my Grumman canoe days when on hot days a bunch of my Bohemian pals and I would swamp her just for the fun of it. The flotation in her bow and stern caps was skimpy and just barely kept her afloat when empty. It was clear signal to me that anything that would provide extra buoyancy in a canoe or small boat was not entirely without merit. All the more so as the motor was both fairly heavy for its size and expensive.



Outrigger in place

So I left the flotation in place and clamped the outriggers on the only available unobstructed space, a section just forward of the front bench. It made for a somewhat odd looking canoe but the outriggers were very nice and the location worked out better than



expected. They were not needed in the least when the canoe was underway but I found them extremely helpful when fishing. Well, I'll call it fishing but I really mean crawling all over the canoe trying to get to the cooler for a sandwich.



Cross brace.

A good thing about the Nielsen outriggers was I could easily adjust them so they rode out of the water when I cranked the motor and the bow rose. This way they would not splash water on me while underway nor add to the motor's drag load. As I slowed to a stop, the bow would drop a few inches and the pontoons would ever so gently come to a rest on the water surface to keep her rock steady. I could easily stand up and move around.

I liked the setup so much I mounted a marine battery in the bow and attached a transom style hand controlled trolling motor to the outrigger cross brace. I could now stand up and with very little effort drop the troller in the drink. With just a nudge of my knee I could precisely steer her to the lunger holes. I even laid rubber carpet liner down the boat which killed the clanging bell ringing noise that aluminum canoes tend to have and tuned her into a silent, nimble and deadly fishing machine. As a result, I was able to do no wrong and sneaked up to many a monster perch, some of which were as much as 8", maybe 9" long. She was a unit and I mounted my long handled fish net to the cross bar like a broom on a submarine conning tower to show the world I swept Marshfield clean.

That 65lb lead acid battery up front balanced the boat out nicely. Before I rigged the trolling motor I had to toss a couple of 25lb barbell weights into the bow to keep the snout down. The battery eliminated the need to do that. It was even cooler than I described and I used her a lot.

And for the motor, well, I will give the devil its due, the 4hp four stroke Yamaha always started up with a pull or two and was a trustworthy unit. It also had plenty of pep for the boat but (a big but) it had one issue that drove me nuts. It was a loud beast with an in your face presence that wore me down to a nub.

It seems to me it was a half baked effort by Yamaha as I compared that motor to a friend's 20 year old 6hp two stroke Johnson. With the exception of having to mix a little oil in the fuel, I found the Johnson to be a superior motor in every way to the Yamie. The Johnson was every bit as reliable, much, much quieter, a heck of a lot smoother and was by no means a smog belching fuel hog. Among other things, the Yamaha had only one cylinder and the Johnson had two, which was a surprising difference. In comparison, not only did the Yamie run rougher than a corn cob, but she took about half of the little

bit of fuel she used and turned it into pure noise. For such a small motor she sure had a terrible nasty pounding presence that would have made a great Bufferin commercial. Or was it Anacin, Excedrin?

That flaw was made worse by being in a small boat. There was nothing I could do to put some real estate between us as the built in bench where I had to mount my cushy seat limited where I could be, which was a foot from the damned motor. Yamaha, your small motor was outperformed by a 20 year old competitor's unit! But then again, I just could be first person who ever came up with the idea that an outboard motor shouldn't make your ears bleed. I am being catty. I know outboard motor owners who complain about noise all the time and I would like to see manufacturers post decibel ratings.

I typically wear ear plugs when I cruise as even with a quiet motor the wind noise gets annoying at anything much over 10mph and can be fatiguing after a day. Ear plugs did not help though as the pounding from that brutal one lunger still shot right through my head. I even bought a pair of noise protection earmuffs which were a mild improvement but didn't do much to mitigate the kerchunking.



Inside view.

To get around it, I surmised a few extra feet between the motor and my head couldn't help but be an improvement. I Rube Goldberged a broom handle to the tiller by sliding a 10" section of vinyl milking parlor hose over the throttle twist grip and securing it with a couple of clamps. The short hose made for a flexible joint and the clamps held it tight. Believe it or not, it worked "factory set up" good. A simple turn of the handle and the throttle responded as accurately as if the handle was being directly turned.

The pole ran kitty corner across the boat from the motor handle on the left side to under my armpit on my right side. An unexpected bonus happened as when I pulled the handle forward it would swivel the motor to the right the boat would turn to the left. If I nudged it back it would swivel the motor to the left and the boat would turn right. It was intuitive, smooth, responsive and rock solid. I moved the seat to the bench in the middle of the boat which I declared to be the new helm location. I could now operate the boat from the middle seat which didn't reduce the noise even a hair but made for ideal weight distribution and morphed her into as steady a Sport Boat as one could find.

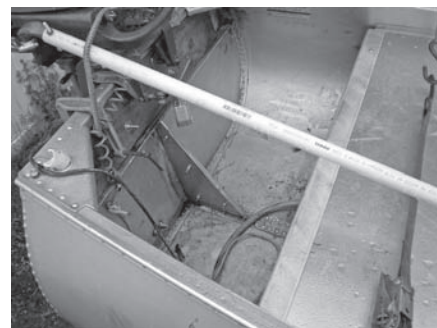
I am a big believer in using every safety feature I can have on a boat so I just tied a few feet of parachute cord to the emergency Jesus cutoff switch on the motor and clipped the other end to my life jacket. If an errant wave tossed me out of the boat, the rope would pull

the trigger and stall out the motor. I could just climb back in the boat by climbing up the outriggers and be good to go, which was another benefit the outriggers provided me. They gave me a nice step in an emergency and was a good reason to have them, if for no other.

I learned the cutoff switch was also a good way to shut off the motor. The owner's manual didn't advise that as the preferred method to shut her down as there was a kill button on the throttle handle, but it worked great. I just turned the throttle down to the lowest setting and, when the motor settled to a slow idle, I pulled the ripcord. I raised many an eyebrow gliding into the boat launch that way but it worked great if I do say so myself. I did not seem to cause any harm to the motor as it would always start up and run to spec after I reinstalled the clip.

So now I had a boat that was wired, switched and rigged for a trolling motor as well as fitted with a prime mover that could be remotely operated. Well almost. Once I started the motor, I had to chunk her in gear, turn around and crab walk to the helm while the prop was turning. Even though it was a low horsepower motor and it was twisted to the slowest idle, being away from the controls of an outboard running in gear in a canoe while one moves around just didn't seem like that good of an idea. I thought there was a chance for something bad to happen and dully noted it the "Room For Improvement" section of the ship's log. I was looking for a cure, and a brainstorm hit me. If I could rig up the steering and throttle with a stick, why couldn't I just do the same thing to the gear shift lever on the side of the motor?

I could and I did. I used a 5' length of 1/2" pvc pipe, a short length of vinyl tubing, a bolt and a clamp. The control pipe rested on the helm bench to my right and ran as a straight shot back to the selection lever on the right side of the motor. I could easily grab it any time I wanted and it was otherwise out of the way, where it never bound a bit even during maximum steering movement. Now I could start the motor and slide into my seat while it was in neutral. When ready to go I just gave the stick a tug to pop her in gear, gave the throttle a gentle twist and I'd ease away from the launch slicker than snot on wet grass.



Remote shifter.

My gear shift was a little less definite than the throttle as I had to fish around a bit to find neutral or reverse, but I learned the limits of this set up and in short order was able to become very accurate and sure of my shifting. I was really beginning to enjoy the boat and I took her to Marshfield Reservoir many times.

The boat came with a couple of 3gal gas cans and the motor had an additional half gallon internal tank. If I fully fueled everything to the brim, I calculated from my daily

consumption that if I was willing to run her down to fumes I could achieve my entire year's boating objective without having to see another gas pump.

Another really good part of having a small boat is that it was very satisfying on small bodies of water. Marshfield is not terribly big but I always thought of it as a wonderful place. To my delight it was extra fun in a small boat. It would take some time to travel from one end to the other and it seemed like an ocean when I was in the middle. I have seen many boaters there in 20' boats sporting several hundred hp motors that were of such size they could have easily chewed up Champlain. They just seemed out of place on something hardly a couple miles long whereas *T.H.E. Scow* fit like a glove.

I found my rig attracted attention everywhere I went. Anytime I stopped for snacks or a cup of joe I found the Sport Boat was like the Pied Piper of boats. It was a regular occurrence to return to the car with my purchase only to see an old guy (like me) hanging over her gunnels pining for her.

I also have to say that a good many times when I was prepping her at the staging lane at a boat launch I would look up and there would be half dozen kids oogling her. Very, very tiny young girls seemed to especially like her, as did the very, very extremely old ones. They thought it was cute. The ones in the middle who I could use an edge with, not so much, but that's a story for another day.

I may have presented an image picturing me as being thoroughly lazy and just liking to get away from the phone and ride around in a boat, eat sandwiches and drink lemonade all day, but I actually like to regularly work out to keep up my he man physique. So I bought a kayak paddle to try out the *T.H.E. Scow's* other propulsion options. After about five minutes I scratched that itch and returned the paddle the same day. I used to enjoy canoe paddling but found it hard to get into that mind set when I had a usable gasoline motor on the stern and a fully charged electric motor on the bow. Besides, the Sport Boat is a hair wider than most canoes or kayaks and thus when I reached over the gunnel on the power stroke of one blade, the returning blade dripped a good shot of water down my arm every time. Maybe kayak paddling would work great but a much longer paddle than is typically found at the generic sporting good stores would be in order.

I then bought a cheap set of oars to give rowing a go. I took her to Marshfield and again I found it wanting. She didn't glide that well. I think the extra weight of the motor hanging off the transom and all the junk I had in her did not help her shine as a rowboat. But I had a hard time removing the motor to row her bare, as that prime mover was fully paid for and worked fine if not for being obnoxiously loud. It was just too stinking easy. I have learned one thing though, I never minded rowing or paddling if that is all that was available, but once there is a motor on a boat any type of manual propulsion loses its charm quickly.

I even tried to find a nicely priced used sail rig on the net but timing was not on my side and no bargain priced specimens popped up anywhere. So a powerboat she was. I used her a ton of times, all with great success, so I thought I would expand my horizons and take her to Champlain. I knew better than to tangle with the open waters in my first venture there so I launched her from the sheltered confines

of the Lamoille River Boat Launch.

She handled the Lamoille great and I cruised all the way from the boat launch to the Milton Dam and back. But you know me, I love Lake Champlain and I have poor judgment, so I headed out into Mallets Bay. I had the brilliant idea of cruising over to the busiest boat launch in the state where I would walk over to Mazza's General Store for a cup of coffee. I got about ten minutes out into the lake only to find that what looked so like glass like from shore was more than a bit hairy a quarter mile out. If I ever thought Marshfield Reservoir seemed big from the point of view of being in a Sport Boat, Mallets Bay was like rounding the Horn. Yikes, I had an uncharacteristic rush of common sense and turned back to the river.

As I powered home, I skimmed through the mouth of the Lamoille where there is a shallow patch and my prop got into the vegetables. I have had many a motor that just churned through them but that 4hp didn't have it in her to do that kind of heavy lifting and she stalled out. I looked to the back of the boat and saw I was towing a 6' long jumble of weeds. If only Ron Propeil had a device for that.

I have had propeller tangles before. On some motors I just hit reverse which unscrewed them from the prop, but it didn't work here as I could not immediately restart her. Maybe some little known sensor in the motor (probably made in China) detected a little bit of a heat issue and shut her down, or some funky thing happened and her diabolical systems got scatiated. Either way, I was dead in the water and wasn't going anywhere by motor as I had more knots in the seaweed than on a rubber band in a balsa wood model plane.

On other jams I could also just raise the motor and cantilever myself over the transom to clear the prop by hand. That was out of the question as even Nadia Comaneci couldn't hang off the back of a Sport boat without going in the drink, hard.

Let's face it, I was stuck. To complicate matters, I could not pull up to shore as it was a turtle breeding area and there were signs around asking boaters not to land. Last thing I wanted was to get a bunch of turtles mad at me for interrupting their afternoon, so I respected their privacy and rowed a good half hour toward the launch where I finally found a shore that wasn't posted. It was muddy and buggy with plenty of dammit stumps and wait a minute vines, but I was able to quickly free the prop. The motor regained her composure by this point and fired right up to give me an otherwise uneventful trip home.

That motor snafu picked at me as I hate being stranded, but aside from that I had a tremendous amount of fun with my Sport Boat and it was almost completely problem free. I know a small boat has its limitations but it made up for it by being so kind to the budget. You might ask, "Do I recommend one?" Yes and no.

This boat was made of the new lightweight aluminum. My original Grumman was the standard weight old school metal. I am sure their engineers have a stack of data a mile high proving it is superior in every way to the old stuff. But as I was the proud owner of similar boats made out of each material and I could compare them directly, I stand firm that I like the old stuff better. I suppose if you are a guide using the boat as it was intended with considerations for portage, car topping, manual propulsion, et al, the light weight might be an asset. For a ham 'n egg just stoog-

ing around with a motor and transporting her with a trailer, the thicker, heavier aluminum reigns supreme. I know the old stuff holds up extremely well in real life use, only time will tell if the new material is as durable.

Over time I realized the boat was shaped like a Cavendish Banana. I was a newbie buying used boats and I didn't check her out very carefully when I bought her. I will never know if she was like that when I bought her or if she morphed into it by the use I gave her. It didn't effect her operation but it sure made it difficult to drain out the splash water. I drilled a hole in the transom and installed a bilge plug, but due to the contour she still did not completely drain. If I wanted to start out with a dry boat I would have to shop vac any standing water out of her as part of my preparation ritual. It was an odd profile, either by design or flaw.

I didn't use the many forms of propulsion which are its claim to fame. I learned something about myself and that is I am a powerboat guy and that is what I will remain. I am thinking that as the other methods didn't appeal to me maybe I would have been better off with a nice 12' deep V hull, which by the way are less expensive.

I think it would be good for Pentagon planners to take a Sport Boat out for a day and try all their forms of propulsion. Then take out boats specifically made for rowing, paddling, kayaking, sailing or motoring. They would soon see that a multipurpose boat does not do anything as well as a specifically designed unit. I wonder if they would have pushed so hard for the F35 if they had that experience.

I have seen other square back types of sport boats such as the unit made by Mitchcraft. They have foam sponsons tacked to the outside of the boat. I thought it was kind of a strong design statement that did not immediately appeal to me when I compared it to the Grumman model. But when I gained experience with the Grumman method of having flotation inside the gunnels, I came around to the Mitchcraft way of thinking. I like to pimp my ride with accouterments such as rod holders, cup holders, pontoon outriggers, trolling motor, etc. The Mitchcraft design facilitates this as it does not clog up the side rails or take space inside the boat. It also occurred to me that with Mitchcraft's design the flotation force is further outboard where it can provide stability sooner than the inboard mounting.

I am a self professed lover of aluminum boats (I watched a video of one being built and found them riveting) but I also have absolutely no wood working skills whatsoever. If you are a wood fan and are looking for something Sport Boatish, Robb White's standby in the *MAIB* classifieds also looks like something you can really hang in. And you know if I ever pick up an issue of *MAIB* and spy an article about a foam Sport Boat with a Briggs lawn mower engine pushing it, you can guess the first article I would read. I have to stop typing and take a break as I'm giving myself the vapors just thinking about it.

I am trying not to harp on it, but I was not happy with the motor. It was just too stinking loud and there was nothing I could do to quiet it down. It made an otherwise reliable motor unacceptable. I also need a motor that either has the power or prop design to cut through weeds, they seem to be a fact of life on more and more lakes.

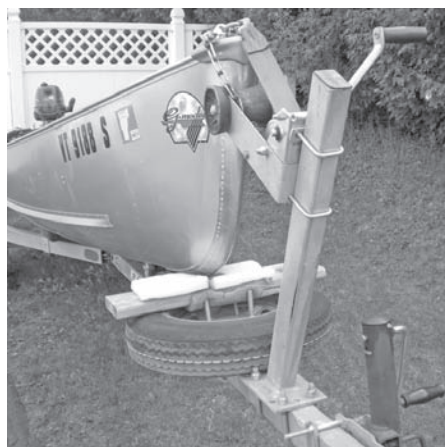
As far as the boat goes, I have to speak well of her as she got me back on my boat-



ing feet for a reasonable sum and after a few years I sold her and broke even. I owned her at a time when I didn't have much surplus cash for boating and there was never a time that I wanted to take her out when I couldn't afford to. I reached my boating goal for the year even with the steep gas prices of the time. I vividly remember driving by hundreds of fairly large expensive looking boats sitting on trailers behind shiny V-8 fuel sucking rigs, dry docked in driveways, when I was happily on my way to the water.

I must also add that that she was forgiving. I found her effortless to launch and recover. I didn't have to worry about a thing. If she wasn't centered on the trailer I could very easily grab on and pop her in place. I used the winch to keep her secure on the trailer but during most recoveries I just pulled her on board with the bowline. What could be faster and easier than that?

She was so light to tow that my compact four cylinder Korean hot rod could easily muscle her around. I got the same gas mileage towing as I did driving the same route sans trailer. From what I can tell, I also towed her without accruing a nickel's worth of wear to the brakes, tires or suspension parts. And yet another bonus, she was so light that even us old guys could unhook the trailer and move her around easily with a little muscle power. Try that with a Carver.



Bow propped up to reach winch.

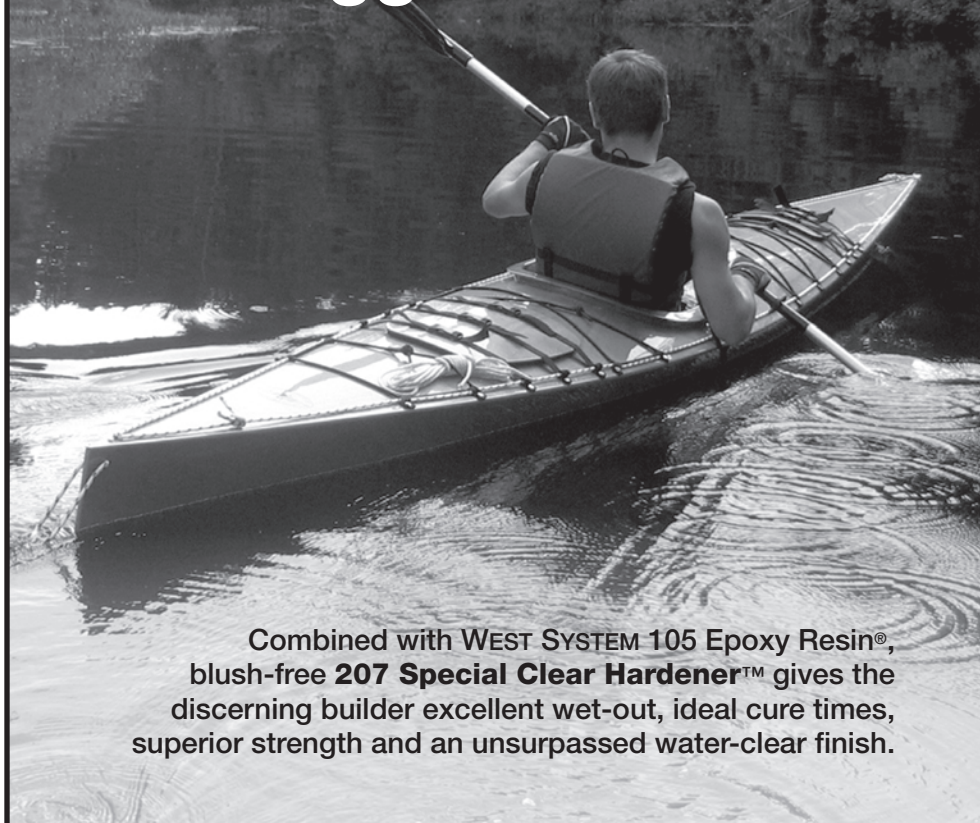
Ultimately, the most severe flaw was with the guy writing this article, her captain, whose tastes changed. As much as I loved complaining about her, she was so little trouble and so much fun that I wanted to expand my range and ply Champlain, which planted the seed of getting a bigger boat. Although I believe she was safe, it was also very clear she was not the right boat to take too far from shore on a large lake where whitecaps can sneak up on you and rude Barcalounger

Cruisers can crack the fillings out of your teeth by their wakes alone.

The chapter ended for me when I could not get over my twofootitis infection. Once it started gnawing at me, her fate was sealed. Then one day, what is this, did my eyes deceive me? Is that a 14' 1960 Grumman Jumbo? Oh here it is, look at that, she has a hole in her, well, will you sell her to me for, ah, gulp, you will? So no matter how much fun I had with my Sport Boat, she didn't stand a snowball's chance because you see the Jumbo was made of the old school thick heavy regular strength aluminum that the engineers say isn't as good. but I like better.



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# All About Our Commuter Boats

By Dave Lucas

It looks like there are some of us who are tired of roughing it and want to go boating in style and comfort and not in a bouncy fiberglass motor boat with no style. If people don't take pictures of your boat it's got no style. These next ones have it.

Pat Johnson of Pensacola, Florida, is the one who got me thinking about this style of boat. I have *Helen Marie* which is comfortable but only goes 5-6mph. As soon as I saw Pat's boat I knew that he had the right idea. He can still slow down to 5mph but he can also throttle up to 25mph. This boat is 18' long. Mine was that length also till I added the 3' extensions at the back to make it run right. Pat built exactly the boat he wanted and after a lifetime on the water he knew what to do to keep the water on the outside.

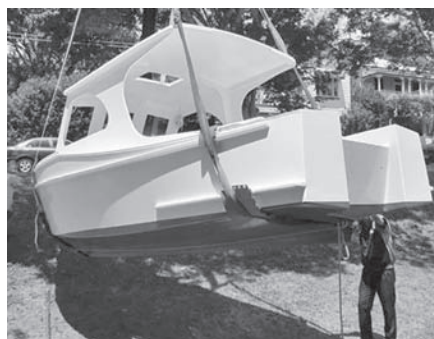
He can go boating anytime he wants, rain or shine and get there in a reasonable time. That's what we're really after, bad weather won't keep us off the water.



John Hockings, way down under in Brisbane, Australia, had the same idea. We've all been boating all of our lives, big boats and small, and by this time we sort of know what we want, which is all weather comfort and dependable speed and power to get where we want to go or get out of trouble. I know, I know the idea is to get out on the water and enjoy Mother Nature, we can just see more of her in one of these. I still have my Sunfish and Melonseed and kayaks but I think I'm going to love *Lurlyne*.



They don't make boats like this for the mass market, they're not sporty looking and can't show young girls in tiny bathing suits on the decks, I guess. Notice that all three of these have standing headroom and comfortable seats. And all are painted with little to no bright work on the outside. I see that John has a sunroof and strakes to deflect spray. I don't know how long this one is, I'd guess 18'-20'. I'll let you know as soon as he tells me. Washington Dan has been after one of these for years but he's too cheap to buy a good motor.



Here's mine taking Kayak Kathy and the dogs out for a demo. I have a spotlight and windshield wipers which I really need. This is an all weather boat and the wipers are a must, it's impossible trying to see through rain or salt spray. I went for the extra money and got the parallel rods that let the wiper blades go back and forth instead of an in an arc, covers more of the window.



I can sit on the steps and change the prop without getting my feet wet. I saw these on Pat's boat and thought they were a brilliant idea. I've tried four different props so far and am getting close to the perfect one, a Black Max 10.25x12 should be just right. I've always taken props for granted, whoever heard of changing the things. Stock boats already have it figured out, but these boats are definitely not stock boats.



It turns out that even though she's able to go 25mph, I'll seldom go that fast but I want to get the maximum performance possible. Wide open throttle with a normal load should spin between 5,500rpm and 6,000rpm. I chose a 60hp motor instead of a 40hp or 50hp because they're all exactly the same motor except for the computer inside. Since they're the same everything including



the weight why not pay the extra \$800 and go big? I'd rather be able to back off the throttle to go the speed I want than have to push a smaller motor.



I've taken her out in some bad weather to see how she acts and am really pleased. The high bow and V-bottom allows me to power straight into nasty waves kicked up by 20mph winds fighting a strong current with no problems at all, as long as I slow down to about 12mph. Across the waves she's good, rides like a cork without much rolling, maybe it's the narrow beam. Down the waves or with them on the quarter can get hairy unless I adjust the speed a little faster so I'm pushing slightly through them, then it settles down nicely. I don't plan on being out in any surfing waves.

I'm still calculating the gas mileage but I think it'll come out to be about 1 1/2 gallons an hour at 4,500rpm which should be about 18mph. I estimate the hull to be about 1,000lbs, motor 250lbs and me and the rest another 750lbs to make the running weight about a ton.

Johnny Mac also has a high speed commuter. Johnny is into aluminum boats and this one looks like it would make a good commuter, but he has to sit down in it.



I talk about Crazy Steve a lot. Here he is coming to work in his fast commuter. It's a 14' open fiberglass boat with a Mercury 15, but he still has *Chelsea*, the air cooled inboard powered Whitehall launch, but it only goes 5mph

while this one goes 25mph. Slow is great until you want to get somewhere.



## GOOD OLD BOAT

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of Sailboats

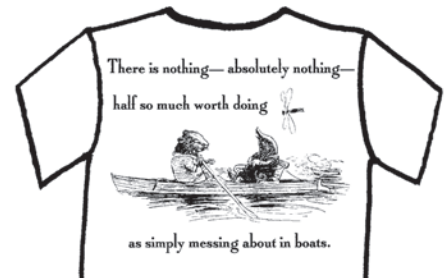
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## Chapter 6.0

Those Elves must have some kinda strong union. Just about as soon as they came to work, they sort of made a mess and then decided to take the rest of the weekend off. And I shut the Frankenwerke down for those guys. Sometimes you just never know.

So I got the crew back from vacation, and put on a few back to back shifts. We cut pine boards up into slats. We turned the rest of the stock of MDO plywood into a couple of unplanned structures. *Miss Kathleen* now sports a hanging locker that will double as a chart table/nav instrument area. But the real big deal was to get all that pine reduced to short pieces and glued onto just about every interior surface. In fact, unless you stand on your head and peak up under the foredeck, there ain't a single patch of fiberglass boat showing. Noplace.

We ran out of cedar lumber to make a couple of accent strips that will drop in pretty easy. But this is pretty much what we look like after a scratch coat of finish painted on with a 1" chip brush after sanding the whole shebang after dinner tonight. The ol' Motrin jar just might be doing a land office business later on.



## The Birthing of *Miss Kathleen*

By Dan Rogers

I'll be afraid to set anything on the long countertop for a while. Then I'll probably drop a wrench, or something heavy and slippery on it, and make it OK to use after that.



So far, other than the tigerwood on the outside (tropical hardwood), everything on the boat is a local species. I've been storing quite a bit of it for "something." I guess this was that something.

While my QA guys are normally all over me for what they call substandard workmanship, I think everybody is pleased with how the different woods seem to belong together.



Well, I think that's what we think anyway. I think I'll let the crew shove off early right after they come around and tell me how good *Miss Kathleen* is looking these days. Who knows, maybe those lazy layabout elves will show up soon...

## Chapter 6.1

This Frankenbuild has reached a critical point where I need to decide how to bring it to an end. There's a lot of covering of tracks going on right now. Less than perfect, less than well thought out and less than skillful work already in place is beginning to need to be covered up. And I sincerely doubt that

I'm any different than Real Boat Builders in this regard. In fact, I neither invented nor use a great deal of 2" putty. Not very much putty in the narrower standard widths either. But beaucoup trim strips.

OK, I admit to really having an affinity for wood grain. It's way less easy to work with in most applications, but I also prefer to use solid wood pieces instead of veneer or "appearance" plywood sheet stock. In fact, this entire boat is literally covered with 1 1/2" and 1 3/4" wide strips. In a world of low and no maintenance things, *Miss Kathleen* will be a high maintenance girl.

Today's focus has been on the aft cabin bulkhead and soon to be door frame. This is where problems a couple months ago with getting the top symmetrical and level to the hull have come home to roost.



After a great deal of head scratching I concluded that audacious would best conceal a 3/4" disparity from one side to the other.



And exceedingly labor intensive. Much like Johnny Cash's famous home built car, "...one piece at time..." I can hardly wait to see what will crop up tomorrow.





## Chapter 6.1a

What a difference (part of) a day makes. Yesterday things were sort of more or less kinda to a possible stopping point. Probably. It was time to devote some attention to the antics of the Christmas Elves that have sort of taken up residence in the shop while waiting for me to put the boat project to bed for a while and properly supervise 'em. But I was sort of unsupervised myself.

First, "one more itty bitty little piece..." morphed into a full blown screeching and roaring from a collection of edge tools. Then it was time to spread varnish among the new stuff. And before you can say "AlmostChristmasEve," I was hanging cabinet doors and putting tools away.

I've already been offered suggestions to apply "Lucas varnish" (white latex house paint) to the jumble of natural finished wood grain. And while my choice of color and shade and such won't have a totally universal appeal, I'd like to think it'll work out OK.



All things considered, or at least a few of the more important ones, I'd say we're looking pretty good. For a 90 day wonder Frankenbot anyway.



The birch doors, hung up above, cover shallow small stuff pukas and, once ogee'd to match the darker ones below, they will serve as some sort of photo or painting frame.



So now if those elves will just show up for work in the morning, we'll be doing "other things" for a while...probably...

## Chapter 6.2

New Year's Day. 0900. I sent the Christmas Elves packing a day or so ago. At the moment most of the normal recent winter domestic/household stuff is handled, broken pipes repaired, sub floor and hardwood floor replaced from water damage, hot water tank replaced, snow crushed boatsheds repaired, busted trees bucked up and hauled out of the road and, of course, snow plowing. Of course. Sure, there's always something else raising its ugly head.

Today is the 1th of January, the day we all start breaking our resolutions. And so far I still have one resolution in place. Well, maybe a couple.

This year I resolve to DO more boating. I resolve to stop and enjoy the company and friendship and general well being that comes from associating with like minded people engaged in a wholesome pursuit. I resolve to put the tools down more and pick up the charts and make real plans to go places and do things with this fleet of hulls that calls me "dad."

But here's barely two months until the first scheduled outing so I'm afraid the first step in keeping my resolution is to sort of break it. Much, much yet to do. *Miss Kathleen* has to be closed up and made seaworthy. Roadworthy and a couple of other worthys that I'll think of in a bit. Lotsa work to do, only about 60 days to get it done in. So progress pictures will have to wait until after the night shift shoves off for home. I do wonder how many of those lazy layabouts are gonna show up on New Year's Day. I'll have to check with the foreman on that. Anyhow.

The list is getting down to where it just about fits on the surface of my shop white board. Naturally, most of the bullets on that list represent stuff that was too complicated to already have gotten done. Most everything must be not only invented as a stand alone thing, it must somehow fit with what all the rest of the stuff does already. This is a tough time for a guy with a pretty short memory for jobs already done. So I guess you could say that once the Frankenbuild TO DO list gets shorter, the level of cranial involvement goes up exponentially.

So today's punch list includes making and fitting some kind of a door on the tail end of the cabin. We need some way to steer this yacht from inside the cabin. And I insist that I be able to steer and operate the motor from the cockpit as well. The port side of the cabin still is without that over elaborate "badge" made out of short pieces of pine woven in a herringbone tweed pattern. The boat has been shoved against the wall on that side and is rather impossible to get to. I'll have to move the boat, too. Of course. And if the guys are really clicking, we'll get some sort of forward window frame dreamed up. And finally, some sort of fairing pieces will need to attach themselves to the forward roof support frame to make the variable slope of the side windows land amicably at that end. We've got stuff to get done.

2300: Well, both the day shift and night shift were pretty productive. We've got a door frame that almost fits the hole and swings pretty much as expected.



And we took a vintage cable steering mechanism and found a way to mount it. The cables will lead aft and go through a series of blocks that will actuate the rudder head fitting by way of the former sailboat traveler. That will be pretty slick as I expect to be able to steer with the tiller without disconnecting the steering wheel. We painted the wheel and it doesn't look completely ugly.





I've got to make a wooden spinner out of some sort of exotic board for the center of that old, old steering wheel. That should perk it up. This whole business is hung from a chunk of aluminum channel that I brought home from the metals store for something. I hope that whatever it was wasn't real important because I cut a big hunk of it off for this setup. Best part is that the cables should hide pretty much completely inside the cabinets on the run aft.

Then it got complicated. I managed to lose the circlip off the end of the steering shaft. That took a trip to town to get the special pliers and a couple of the clips. Twenty bucks for the pliers, 20¢ for the clip. I probably only need one of those tools about every ten years or so. Certainly, the next time I need one I won't be able to find this one.



And the portside herringbone tweed thingie is clamped on and awaiting a trip to the hardware store to get the proper length bolts. Another couple three hours and that should be getting close to done as well. We also got a forward window frame assembled, shaped, rabbeted, sanded and awaiting a proper piano hinge and a few more hours of fretting and stewing. And the fairing pieces are shaped, glued and nailed in place as well.

Not a bad accounting for a holiday. I was in such an expansive mood, I knocked off the night shift early. Happy New Year, guys!

## Chapter 6.3

Fiddly bits take a lot of time. The Great Lucas had this to say, "Now that you've got it 90% done you've only got 90% to go..." The Bard of Bradenton really knows how to put a guy in his place, eh?

This is all that stuff that I didn't know how I wanted to do at the time. Now I have to figure it out and, for the normal hum and

thrum of the Frankenwerke, this plod, plod, plodding along is really outta character.

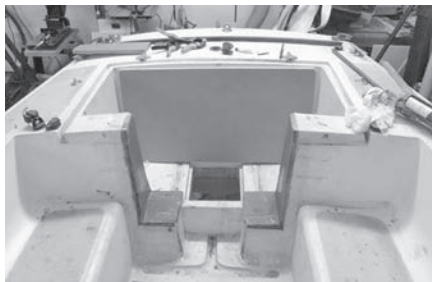
Except night before last I had been off to The Big City on multiple missions all day. There wasn't a bit of work done out in the shop the whole day. Those modern day gumshoes on TV would probably call it a crime of passion. There's been something just below the radar for the longest time. A serious consideration that continued to be left off of the punch list. A vague requirement that never even made it to "blueprint" (make that restaurant napkin) stage. Just something that I pretty much knew would need to be undertaken sometime.

Like I was saying, it was a crime of passion. I spied the Sawzall hanging in its accustomed place. There was already a cord stretched out to the cockpit. Almost before I knew what I was up to, the cuts were laid out. Goggles, muffs, gloves and that distinctive staccato sound began. As a side note, there are several distinctive sounds well-lodged in my memory that almost never mean something good is happening. The tearing and wholesale ripping of sheet metal in a serious car crash is one. The rumble thump of a mounted 50cal opening up would be another. But in some ways the chatter of a rough toothed recip saw blade against gel coat and its polyester substrate always gives me pause.

There is just no way that this sort of thing can be accurate, quiet or without mess. And in this case it went worse than normal. Like I said, it was an overdue crime of passion. This entire project has been centered around a big hole, a motor well actually. The main reason I picked this particular hull and have put all this time, effort and, yes, money into building my dream boat started with the fact I could mount a motor inside outta sight.



In front of the rudder, accessible to the cockpit. But there's been a nagging doubt. It often comes up at the morning planning sessions, then it gets set aside. "For later..." This motor well was designed for a small motor of the 1960s, probably something with a slide throttle on its forehead. Probably direct drive. Probably just for getting the original sailboat in and out of the slip. And it was built like a cathedral, no space for the shift lever or other appurtenances of a contemporary outboard. Until last night, that is.



Nothing that a few squirts of Duckpox, some bi ax tape and a quarter sheet of MDO plywood can't cure. I just can't quite figure out what I've been putting this off for. Oh yeah, there's another big hole that wasn't there a few hours back.



And inside that gaping hole is where the stern anchor's chain and rode will reside. And the flying saucer contraption pictured here will also live there. It's a DIY radial steering arrangement made out of tractor parts that I beat onto a 1" bronze shaft. But that's still to be programmed into the schedule. Probably soon though.

Fiddly bits. Little and not so little pieces of trim have been migrating from the lumber pile to various places around the cabin. There's a swing up front window frame mounted that is about ready for a chunk of glass or plex.



The aft cabin door has sprouted both hold it open and hold it closed attachments. And, taaaahh daaahh, a pretty spiffy deer antler handle and a nice teak one.

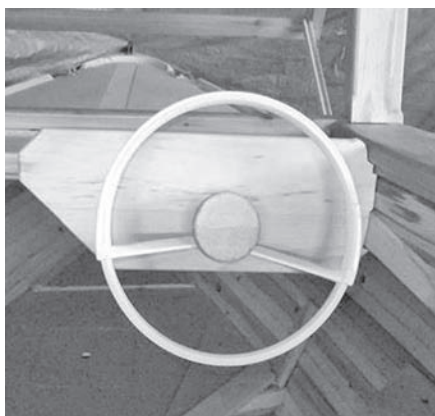




Most of the fill in pieces are filled in. Like the stuff that will hold the side window panels.



And there's a little maple spinner on the ancient steering wheel that took way too long to fabricate and attach. And now it's a bit crooked in the bargain. Maybe I'll just think of as being "jaunty."



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## Right of way... right of way!!!





The Rhodes Bantam sloop is an open racing dinghy designed by the renowned naval architect Philip Rhodes in the mid 1940s. It is 14' long, about 325lbs and carries 130sf of working sail (including a large genoa jib) and a large spinnaker set on a 7' long spinnaker pole. The first Bantams were produced by the Skaneateles Boat Company in the Finger Lakes region of Upstate New York. The hulls were made out of 1/4" fir plywood on mahogany frames. They were an instant hit after WWII and eventually almost 2,000 boats were produced, first in wood but later in fiberglass. Fleet racing was active in upwards of 30 fleets and the Rhodes Bantam Class Association held an International Regatta every summer at venues as widespread as New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois and Mississippi.

At age 15 (I am now 71) I fell in love with the Bantam and convinced my father to share in the purchase of a new Gibbs Boat Company wood boat, #836. I sailed and raced that boat on Acton Lake near Oxford, Ohio, all through high school and then traded her on a new wood Baycraft boat, #1257, when I was in college. Finally, after college, grad school and a five year hitch in the Air Force, I settled in Upstate New York, got a Dean of Students staff job at Colgate University, sold #1257 and bought #1775, *Spirit*, from the legendary dinghy racer and builder, Dick Besse in Skaneateles, New York. My late son and I won the Rhodes Bantam International Regatta with this boat in 1981 and 1983, and I still maintain it and daysail it from time to time. It was the first wood Bantam built without frames and it was and remains a joy to sail in a fresh breeze.

Like many two person racing dinghy classes, the Rhodes Bantam Class fell on hard times starting in the late 1970s as new classes came on the scene and younger sailors gravitated to Lasers and crewing on larger one design racers. By the end of the 1980s only a few fleets remained and the Class no longer held its annual International Regatta. A few reunion regattas were held in conjunction with other regattas in Upstate New York, but for all practical purposes the Class simply faded away. I and a few other diehards kept our boats and the most recent gathering for Bantams was held on Cazenovia Lake (New York) in July 2011. Four boats competed in a weekend regatta, perhaps the last organized Rhodes Bantam race the sailing world will ever see. Racing in this fine little boat may have ceased but the interest of where the Bantam fits into the history of small boat sailing and racing continues.

The Skaneateles Historical Society owns a lovely museum, "The Creamery," in the Village of Skaneateles, New York. The museum has displays that chronicle the history, culture and industry of the region and displays a number of small craft built and

## Finding Rhodes Bantam #2 A Nautical Treasure Hunt

By Alan Glos

sailed in Skaneateles. A few years ago they acquired *Lightning* #1 on long term loan from the Mystic Seaport collection and she is now on display in a new wing of the museum. Google "Skaneateles Historical Society, the Creamery" if you want to see photos of *Lightning* #1. The family of the late Dick Besse also loaned the museum Dick's last Bantam build, R-B #1823, *Woodwins*, a stitch and glue wood hull built without frames or chine logs. This boat is a real beauty and is proudly displayed next to *Lightning* #1.

However, the Skaneateles Historical Society had an interest in acquiring a much older, historical Rhodes Bantam for their collection, and knowing of my interest in the class, one of the Society board members approached me to see if I was interested in finding a suitable candidate for display in their museum. I readily agreed but little did I know the search would take the better part of the next six years.

All Rhodes Bantams were issued hull numbers when built so I started the quest to find the oldest Bantam hull in existence. A quick internet search turned up Lawrence Fortunato's excellent Rhodes Bantam website and photo gallery that also featured a bulletin board where visitors to the site could post comments. Sure enough, a gentleman named Charles Jannace posted that he had owned Rhodes Bantam #1 in 1954-55 and had sailed her on Little Neck Bay on Long Island (New York). Then came another post from a gentleman named Alexander Scott who stated that his family had owned and raced Bantam #2. Alexander also stated that #1 was no longer in existence and his father, Fred Scott, had redesigned the interior and #2 was the actual prototype for all the subsequent wood Bantams. (Author's note: Fred Scott went on to design several popular small sailboats, most notably the Force 5 and the Puffer.) Alexander left a telephone number and the search for #2 was on.

I called Alexander Scott and explained my interest in finding #2. The call also reminded me that I had actually sailed on #2 with Alexander's brother, Rick Scott, one summer afternoon in 1963 (I was 19 at the time) when I was on vacation in Skaneateles. I also learned that #2, named *Cockereel*, had quite the racing pedigree having won the R-B International Regatta in 1949 and again in 1953. Alexander explained that the Scott family had regrettably sold #2 to an attorney named Larry Hale who lived somewhere in Massachusetts.

After a little more internet sleuthing I found a website for a "Lawrence Hale, Esq" in Carver, Massachusetts. Using the firm's

website, I emailed Mr Hale and he confirmed that he had purchased #2 in 1981, did some work on her and even took her on his honeymoon in Maine in 1984. He also explained that he had given the boat to the Rev Cuthbert Mandell, now the rector of the Aquia Episcopal Church in Stafford, Virginia. I found an email address for the Rev Mandell, wrote him and found that he indeed had owned #2 but ended up giving it to somebody who lived on Cape Cod, no name, address or telephone number. The trail had suddenly gone very cold. Bummer. Then, somewhat out of the blue, Mr Mandell contacted me again and said that he learned (through a third party) that the name of the last known owner of #2 was a Mr Mark Sherwin, a print artist on Cape Cod. But again I had no contact information. If you know anything about Cape Cod, you know that there are a lot of artists who live there and a cursory web search did not yield a match. But I kept at it and in my spare time did numerous web searches with different key words. Finally I found a post on an obscure artists' website where (ta dah!) a Mr Mark Sherwin had posted and left (ta dah again!) a cell phone number!

I immediately called the number and, after leaving a few messages on his answering machine, I finally had a live telephone conversation with Mark who confirmed that he was indeed the current owner of RB #2 and he might be interested in selling her or donating her for my museum project. He stated that he would contact me in a few months and we could work something out. I was elated, but my elation was a bit premature.

Months passed, and I did not hear from Mark. I tried to reach him again with no luck. I suddenly had this image of the hulk of RB #2 sitting on the bank of a salt marsh somewhere on the Cape slowly but surely rotting away.

I had one other lead. I have a friend here in my hometown of Cazenovia, New York, who had spent a lot of time on Cape Cod and knew the Sherwin family. He made a few inquiries and, lo and behold, Mark emailed him in at the end of August 2015 referenced my earlier contact and expressed an interest in selling the boat! In Mark's email to my friend he said that he had been dealing with some serious health problems (that may have accounted for some of our earlier miscommunications) but I now had a new, valid email address and telephone number for Mark. I wrote and called him right away.

Over the next few weeks Mark and I corresponded regularly. I learned that Mark's son, a sailmaker in Seattle, Washington, had removed the plywood bottom from the hull and replaced several damaged mahogany frames aft of the centerboard trunk. RB #2 was also missing the mast and a tiller handle. Mark emailed me a number of good photos. We agreed on a fair price that would cover his storage costs over the years and restoration





efforts to date and settled on a pickup date.

On October 14, 2015, I pulled up to Mark Sherwin's house in Sandwich, Massachusetts, and saw RB #2 live for the first time in 52 years. As advertised, the bottom was missing but Mark's son had done a fine job of replacing several damaged mahogany frames. There were only pieces of the mast left, no tiller handle and the rudder was a kick up design not original to the boat. As is, the boat was not going to win any beauty contests but she had, as they say, "good bones" and could be restored to display condition with a new plywood bottom, a lot of sanding, paint, varnish and some "new," period correct components. Mark could not have been more gracious. I am sure he had some regrets about parting with this boat but I sensed that he shared my vision of where she should spend the rest of her days. I handed Mark cash, he signed a bill of sale and I was off to brave the hazards of the infamous Bourne Bridge rotary and the Mass Pike back to my home in Upstate New York.

RB #2 now sits in my nice dry barn awaiting some TLC this spring when the weather warms up again. I have located another 1940s vintage Skaneateles Bantam hulk nearby that might yield a suitable rudder and mast and floorboards and my hope is to have the boat ready for display in about a year. However, after more than six years searching, I am not in a huge rush.

There are really two stories here. The first is about the birth, life and eventual demise of a fine little sailboat class. The second is about how to find a 70 year old relic so people can see her and reflect on just what a great little boat she was. I am happy to be part of both stories. I have mixed feelings about the internet, but without various websites, search capability and email, I would have never found this boat.

If you have an interest in the Rhodes Bantam Class or have data to share as the restoration of RB #2 goes forward, I would love to hear from you. I can be reached at aglos@colgate.edu or (315) 655-8296.



## *Nuestra Senora del Carmen y San Antonio* Fighting Hurricane off East Coast of Florida, 1715

A Painting by James A. Flood 2015

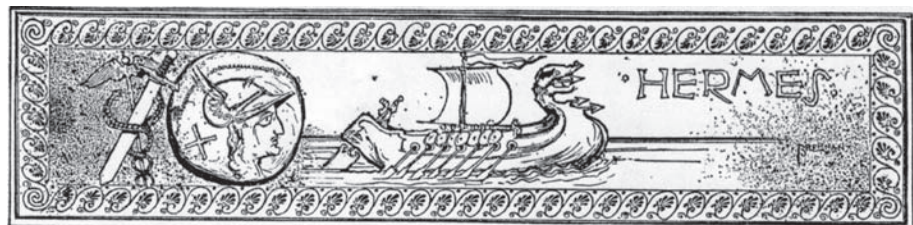
*Nuestra Senora del Carmen y San Antonio* originated as *HMS Hampton Court* in England in 1678, a 70 gun third rate ship of the line, part of Charles II's ship building program. In 1707 she was captured by the French off Beachy Head in the War of Spanish Succession and later sold to the Spanish.

In this painting it is late July and the Spanish Treasure Fleet of 1715 is sailing just off the east coast of Florida with *Nuestra Senora del Carmen y San Antonio* serving as flagship. It has been four days since the fleet's departure from Havana Harbor and the weather has suddenly turned foul. Threatening clouds dim the sun and the waves begin to rise and crest, all portending the coming of a great storm. One French ship decides to ignore the fleet course and heads offshore as close to the wind as possible and is ultimately saved, missing the storm altogether. The rest of the fleet are caught on a dangerous lee shore with rising wind overpowering their ability to navigate and tack offshore to safety.

Ultimately all 11 ships will end up sunk or beached just offshore, *Nuestra Senora del Carmen y San Antonio* the only one to beach intact. She is portrayed here in the midst of the storm, her sails balanced at minimum rig as she braves the turbulent wind and sea. In the near distance a second ship can be seen having already succumbed to the powerful winds. Barely visible in the far distance is yet a third ship. She soldiers on, managing in spite of the loss of her fore topmast.



James Flood built and hand carved this beautiful boat, *Duchess of Portsmouth*. He and *Duchess* can often be observed motoring in South Florida waterways.





# “Threading a Maze of Shoals”

## The first boats and early cruises of Erskine Childers

Reprinted from Dinghy Cruising

Journal of the Dinghy Cruising Association (UK) – [dinghycruising.org.uk](http://dinghycruising.org.uk)

Keith Muscott

Throughout his sailing life Erskine Childers was blessed with crew who were tough, accomplished sailors. He was taught to sail as an undergraduate by Walter Runciman, who came from a serious seagoing background that included his father and his grandfather, a schooner captain. He read the Baltic adventures of EF Knight, who had cruised widely in *Falcon*, a converted ship's lifeboat. He learned a lot from his own first experiences, too, gained while sailing *Shulah*, a 35ft cutter owned in partnership with his older brother Henry, which they eventually sailed under the eye of a young fisherman who had been invited on board as sailing master. He introduced Childers to what he came to see as '... the only perfect cruising ground which the British Isles can afford ...' (the West Coast of Scotland, especially the Clyde. No doubt *Shula's* 8ft draught influenced this opinion.)

This seems to be the only time the Childers brothers relied on a paid hand, but it was a wise decision considering their inexperience and the waters they visited in *Shulah*. Childers wrote that '... fortune sent our way a young Scotch (*sic*) fisherman, rather slovenly, ignorant of yachts, but infinitely good-natured and delighted to let us go where we pleased ... so long as he had nominal control of the spruce little cutter ... We became fast friends and had a time of pure delight,' which was no doubt true, but Childers never acknowledged him by name in print, doubtless following the social strictures of the time.

Of greater interest to us is the boat Childers acquired for use on the Thames when he took up his post in the House of Commons in 1895: *Marguerite*, which he called *Mad Agnes* in honour of an eccentric aunt. He swapped a share in the sea-going cruiser for a half-decked dinghy with a boom-over tent, but he was to do ambitious things in her. This suggests he may have been an openboat man at heart.

*Marguerite* was clinker built and varnished, measuring 18ft LOA by 6ft beam. Plate down, she drew 4ft 6ins. Plate up, she drew 2ft 6ins aft and 2ft 1ins forward, dimensions which show that she conformed to the traditional concept of a sea boat back then, with a pronounced keel and plenty of deadwood aft. In fact her tent was not the usual 'over-boom' variety but a self-designed bell tent of oiled canvas, which hooked on to the 3ins coaming that ran round the boat and joined the stem-to-mast foredeck, to be hauled up on a single halliard – so an asymmetrical bell tent, then. *Marguerite* carried a 20lbs / 9.1kg anchor with 20 fathoms of chain (120ft / 36.6mtrs). The rig was balance lug mainsail plus jib (see photograph above right).

He became a member of The Cruising Club in 1895, proposed by the Treasurer, JG Pease, who later cruised to the Mediterranean via the Rhone in 1896 and published



*Marguerite* / 'Mad Agnes', photographed by William le Fanu

an account in the CC's *Journal*. (The Cruising Club was founded in 1880, and became the Royal Cruising Club in 1902 when it received its royal charter.)

The Club's three stated aims are close to those of the DCA: to acquaint those members who use water craft of all sizes and types on river, lake and sea with one another; to enable the flow of useful information between them; and to circulate their cruise accounts via its *Journal*.

The CC's cheap, plated cruising cup did not offer much of a temptation, and exciting cruising logs were slow in coming, but a handsome silver replacement was provided in 1895 by new member Admiral de Horsey and its first winner was Erskine Childers in *Marguerite*.

You may find that de Horsey's approval of the CC's aims and objectives sounds familiar too:

'... deserving of every encouragement, as conducive to the study and practice of navigation on our coasts, and of handling small vessels in all weather – a far worthier object than that of most clubs which unfortunately encourage the winning of prizes by racing machines ...'

*Marguerite's* cruise sped Childers on his way to becoming an accomplished Corinthian sailor\*. In its detail it reveals dinghy cruising as it was in that bygone age, when a continuous stay on board was not deemed essential in defining what was a cruise.

Early in July 1895 he set off from Greenhithe on the Thames with fellow Commons clerk Stephen Simeon. They beat to Sheerness, where they left the boat and repaired to the Port Victoria hotel. Next day they sailed to Rochester then returned to Port Victoria and caught

\* *Corinthian*: displaying the highest standards of sportsmanship without using expert help. In the context of Victorian and Edwardian sailing, being 'hands-on' and independent of paid crew and professional skippers and escaping from the 'gentlemen and players' attitude. The term was popular in America, where it was used more widely in sport than just for yachting, and it soon crossed the Atlantic.



the Loridón train in the evening.

He returned to *Marguerite* alone the day after with ample stores for a lengthy sailing leg. Herne Bay, Margate, Ramsgate, Dover and then Folkestone were fetched in a leisurely way, then he was delayed by unfavourable winds. After losing his tiller overboard off Dungeness, he – not for the last time – substituted his mop handle.

In improved conditions he reached Hastings and then Eastbourne, but then his tent and camping arrangements were tested severely during a wild night anchored in three fathoms off Bembridge.

On July 19 he left his boat there with a fisherman and caught a train to Ryde, then a steamer to Portsmouth, followed by another train that took him to Newcastle, where he boarded his friend Walter Runciman's *Edith* for a ten-day cruise, returning to *Marguerite* on July 31!

By August 3 he was in Poole Harbour admiring the view of the castle on Brownsea Island and giving five boys of the Camberwell Church Lads Brigade a sail around the Harbour (they were camped nearby). They grounded on the ebb and were stuck for some hours. Childers' log makes amusing reading:

'Boys demolished every ounce of food on board and then like a litter of puppies simultaneously dropped down and slept. In an hour all woke up simultaneously and were very rowdy.'

Soon after this he left for the Solent, having taken on another friend as crew, Ivor Lloyd-Jones. Cowes Week was at its busiest and they sailed past the town close to Seiner Majestät Yacht *Hohenzollern II*, for the Kaiser was in town, his yacht escorted by four large battle cruisers. Childers was fascinated, finding the yacht to be 'a marvellous compound of destructive force and graceful luxury.'

These were heady and increasingly dangerous times, as the Kaiser had just opened the Kiel Canal in June (then called the Kaiser Wilhelm Kanal, in honour of his grandfather, Wilhelm I). This gave his fleet clear access to the North Sea, and soon the misunderstanding between him and the new Prime Minister, Salisbury, when the discussions between them during this sailing week eventually stalled, saw both countries fail in their intention to protect the Armenian Christians from persecution by the Kurds. What is popularly known as the Armenian Genocide finally came to its peak in 1915.

*Marguerite's* cruise was undertaken eight years before *The Riddle of the Sands* was published, but already Childers was seeing firsthand the development of a deadly rivalry between two nations that underpins the book. Also at Cowes, commanding the cruiser USS *Chicago*, was Captain Alfred Thayer Mahan, whose book on sea power was a favourite of the Kaiser's – and would soon be 'seen' on *Dulcibella's* bookshelf in *The Riddle*.

After a long spell enjoying the Cowes scene, Childers laid up *Marguerite* in Picketts Yard, Southampton, on August 11. It would be five weeks before the cruise was resumed.

Childers returned to her with his brother on September 20 and they headed west along the South

Coast, with no special objective in mind. While gybing to turn into the bay in a struggle with the race off Peveril Point the tiller failed again for the third and fourth times and twice more the mop handle saved the day. They made Weymouth, and left the boat for a day's shooting.

On their return they sailed for Lulworth Cove, possibly following Frank Cowper's recommendation in his *Sailing Tours*, another book that found its way onto *Dulcibella's* shelf. The high pressure system, which had made them uncomfortably hot, now gave them thick fog through which they rowed into the Cove.

Their frustrating and directionless wandering, coupled with the settled weather, probably led Childers to make the most momentous decision of his sailing career thus far: on the following day they crossed the Channel to Cherbourg, taking 19 hours and averaging 3.3 knots. At a stroke he had qualified himself for the CC's trophy by being sufficiently adventurous – he had dared to 'go foreign' – and the experience clearly whetted his appetite for bigger adventures that led to the Friesian Islands and the Baltic in the near future.

Apart from inspiring him to greater things, this phase of the cruise was not a success. Cherbourg was 'mean, dirty and uninteresting.' The continuing high pressure left them windless and at the mercy of the tides in hazy visibility. They headed for Havre, but the heavy centreplate uphaul parted in the middle of the night and they could not beat to windward.

Twenty-five miles short of Havre they fixed the problem at the oyster port of Courseulles. Then, *en route* to Havre, the weather broke and they sailed through a stormy night, falling short of their destination and running in behind Pointe du Hoe to anchor in a muddy creek. They walked into Havre and found a hotel, but struggled to find a place to eat.

The following day they returned just in time to see *Marguerite* being towed away by two thieving fishermen and had to charter a boat to give chase. They resumed command of their vessel but paid a forfeit in the form of missing whisky, wine and shortlink chain.

They took her into Havre, and on October 7 she was hoisted onto the mail steamer and returned to Southampton docks for the sum of £2.11s.9d.

*Marguerite's* total was 30 days' sailing, 7 nights at sea and 462 nautical miles – covered in an open 18-footer. He had discovered his true métier and simultaneously took the Cruising Club's silver cup.

*Marguerite* and her varied crews sailed regularly into 1897, but their weekend adventures were confined to the Thames Estuary and the Solent. It was not long before Childers was thinking about ambitious cruising in a bigger boat, but *Marguerite's* cross-Channel cruise provided seminal experiences, such as sailing late in the year, seeing the Kaiser, having trouble with locals and even wildfowling, which were all to resonate in *The Riddle of the Sands*. The *Riddle* was much longer in gestation than we usually credit.

He sold *Marguerite* in 1898.



## Vixen

Childers became the owner of *Vixen* on August 1, 1897. Strange to tell, she would probably still be with us today through the efforts of The *Dulcibella* Memorial Committee of 1937, which was supported by Molly Childers, had not her identity been called into question in an article by Herbert Hanson, a well-known yachtsman and the Secretary of the Royal Cruising Club.

His opinion carried authority, and others of standing, including Maurice Griffiths and later Eric Hiscock, closed ranks and supported it. The Memorial Fund, which had been growing steadily, froze at £45. Perhaps the most important point to make about these nay-sayers is that they had nothing to go on except the secondhand opinions of others, most never having seen the boat themselves on or off the water.

Clear evidence to rebut this claim of counterfeit was produced on May 25, 1938, when Alexander Moody (of Moody Yachts, Bursledon) gave a statutory declaration before a commissioner of oaths that the hull under consideration had indeed been Childers' *Vixen* and his firm had broken up her dinghy some years before, on which the name had been cut clearly into her transom.

Unfortunately the war started soon after and interest in the Memorial Committee waned, as did the numbers of skilled workers available locally to take on the renovation.

Perhaps it would have helped had *Vixen* been a beautiful vessel, but, like FitzRoy's ten-gun brig *Beagle* a hundred years before her, she was 'not a particular boat', as Charles Darwin told his family before setting sail in her. In other words, she was nothing special. Converted lifeboats were two a penny – as in their day had been ten-gun brigs. Neither boat was saved for posterity. Even Childers said that they were never able to respect *Vixen*,



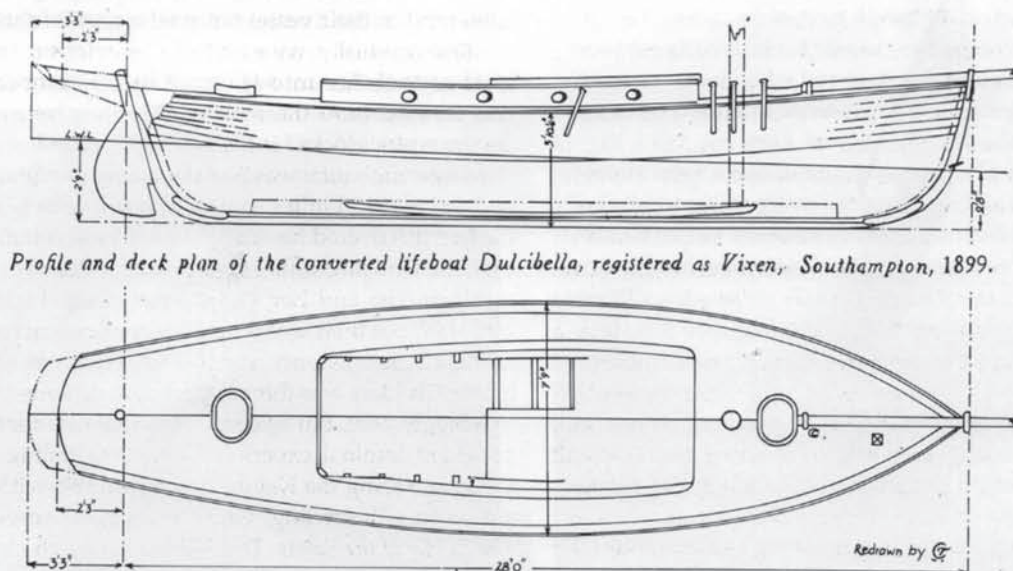
*Vixen* being sailed off Ryde by Erskine Childers, April 30, 1899.

(Photograph: William Le Fanu)

despite coming to love her, as no-one could call her beautiful. She had been a '*pis aller*' (makeshift) bought in a hurry and fitted out for cruising in a bare week.

After the cruise to the Friesian Islands and the Baltic, August 11 – December 14, 1897, which suggested the plot of *The Riddle* and inspired much of its atmosphere, *Vixen* was laid up at Moody's yard for over a year, during which time the Boer War intervened in his life until he undertook a Spring cruise in her in 1899.

He used her for many short trips in the Thames Estuary and the Solent, but in the Spring of 1901 Alexander Moody showed him the beautiful 15-ton, 27 year-old yawl *Sunbeam* and this time it was love at first sight. He formed a syndicate to buy her with William Le Fanu and Alfred Dennis. *Vixen/Dulcibella* was taken in part exchange and so Alexander Moody came to own her and become a knowledgeable authority on the old boat.



Profile and deck plan of the converted lifeboat *Dulcibella*, registered as *Vixen*, Southampton, 1899.

1933 drawing of the cutter *Vixen*, extended to 32ft from 28ft in the conversion from the lifeboat *Thomas Chapman II*, by adding a counter. Renamed *Dulcibella* after his sister, the middle one of three girls, in Childers' last year of ownership. Plans redrawn by Chris Topf from the lines printed in *Yachting Monthly*, March 1945. The beam remained at just over 7ft, not 9ft as suggested in the book.

© *Yachting Monthly*



## Sunbeam

When a writer produces a story as realistic as *The Riddle of the Sands* the more enthusiastic reader can see it as history, not fiction. This has been as much a problem with *Riddle* as it has been with other lifelike yarns, such as Ransome's *Swallows and Amazons*. Far from adding a new dimension to the stories, it is actually quite limiting, because real people and events are forever being twisted in the mind of the reader to match the texts, which are held in a factual straitjacket. Hence the continual argument over the 'real identity' of 'Wildcat Island', for instance, and the persistent attempts to match *Vixen* exactly with the *Dulcibella* of the book, and the searching of records to show that it had all actually happened to Childers, who was of course Arthur Davies, and certainly there had been a real invasion plan, you bet your life there was, which he had foiled.

I ought to add that Childers announced himself as the editor on the book's cover, not the author of the tale, so he was inviting the reader to willingly suspend disbelief and accept it as a real 'Record of Secret Service Recently Achieved' – at least while reading it. These plot devices are enjoyable conceits and had been over used even by the end of the 19th century, but they are also traps for the naive and unwary.

Childers took a lot longer than he had planned to finish *The Riddle of the Sands*, which he started after his syndicate had bought *Sunbeam*, and it was finally printed in 1903. While he was writing it he was sailing *Sunbeam*, a much bigger boat than *Vixen*, and perhaps one which would have lent more dignity to his two heroes had she been featured in the story – but loss of dignity is a great



*Sunbeam* close-reaching off Southampton Water (William Le Fanu)

part of the book's appeal, giving rise to much gentle humour: 'Some people make a point of headroom, but I never mind much about it. That's the centreboard case,' he explained, as, in stretching my legs out, my knee came into contact with a sharp edge.'

In the beginning Carruthers stands on his 'silly egotism' and cuts a ridiculous figure when he loses the fight with his excessive kit, then sulks and juggles a soggy parcel of raw meat while boarding *Dulcibella*.

The single drop from the leaking deckhead above his bunk is the punctuation mark that defines the high water of his hubris. 'I'm awfully sorry,' said Davies earnestly ... 'It must be the heavy dew.'

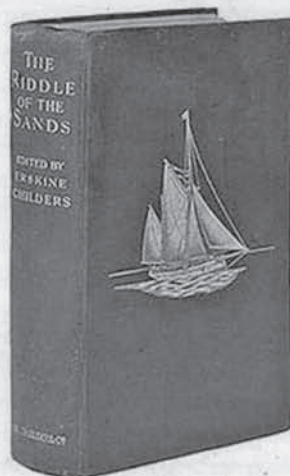
'Two men doubled up like monkeys cannot argue,' Carruthers says, and we begin to sense that he is the perfect narrator. Of course he gybes the boat all standing; of course he is cracked on the head by the boom; but after his 'short and furious' morning swim 'in the loveliest fiord of the lovely Baltic' we sense he is becoming a different – and wiser – man.

The scruffy insouciance of *Dulcibella* and her crew stands in contrast to Dolman and his immaculate barge yacht, and the urbane von Brüning, Commander of the gunboat *Blitz*, 'an ugly cranky little vessel'. Childers draws a vivid picture of his two young Corinthians on their chosen mission and his first readers warmed to them quickly, despite some initial bad reviews. He has since been criticised by superficial readers for creating 'cardboard' characters, but Carruthers and Davies complement each other so perfectly they will live forever.

Was it possible for Childers to associate any other boat with that 1897 trip to the Frisian Islands and the Baltic? The adventures he draws on for the story were forever bound up in his mind with the little cutter: the way she lay when beached; and the fact that her hull was really too small for a lifeboat or a yacht – she was the runt of the litter, originally constrained to be run down to a beach through a tunnel in a white chalk cliff!

The 'saloon' was painfully restrictive and the forecastle bulkhead was closed by a sliding door on the port side like that of a hutch. He gives her a mizzen in the novel, but it is an afterthought: 'there seemed to be a new rope or two, especially round the diminutive

mizzen-mast, which itself looked altogether new'. Davies had installed it before Carruthers arrived at Flensburg, after he had nearly drowned on the Hohenhorn Bank, but the small mast is an innovation for Childers as well, via *Sunbeam*.



First edition of *Riddle of the Sands*, with a handsome big yawl – surely *Sunbeam* – on its cover



Claude Hapgood on *Dulcibella* / *Vixen*, 1932



'Did you find Herr Krank the carpenter? I see you have placed a little mizzen-mast,' says Schiffer Bartels of the galliot *Johannes*, the only one to have witnessed Davies's near-undoing on the Hohenhorn.

*Dulcibella* in the novel is not a replica of the little cutter *Vixen*. *Dulcibella* has a beam of over 9 feet (close to that of *Sunbeam*, which was 10ft); *Vixen*'s was 7ft 3 ins.

The claustrophobic turmoil below decks is pure *Vixen*, but *Dulcibella* has two skylights, one illuminating the saloon, one the sleeping quarters. *Vixen* had none.

*Vixen* had only a bulkhead between the forecabin and saloon, but *Dulcibella* has a lobby that accesses the deck via a companion (where Clara stumbles and hurts her head). Apart from these details *Dulcibella*'s forecabin and saloon are close to *Vixen*'s, but changes are made to the boat aft from there, giving the fictional crew more room and more protection – and an extra sail.

Maldwyn Drummond (in his superb book *The Riddle*) makes the perceptive point that Childers the author sometimes slips back into his memory of *Vixen*, as when they are towed from Bensersiel with Carruthers and von Brüning cuddled together, 'backs to the wind

Childers' sister Dulcibella on *Vixen* (William Le Fanu)



and spray' facing Davies on the helm. Suddenly we are back on *Vixen*'s unprotected deck!

All this is mere theorising: the boat in the novel is the creation of the novelist and he can have it however he likes. But it seems the old *Vixen* still gripped Childers's imagination during the time he owned *Sunbeam* and for years to come he could never forget that he undertook the Friesian cruise in her.

Alexander Moody removed the iron centreplate and sold *Vixen/Dulcibella* to a Mr George Newbury for £12, who used her as a weekend cottage at Hill Head Haven after building a 'rough gazebo' on her. The Registrar of British ships struck her off his list on November 27, 1906, noting her conversion to a 'houseboat'. After a few years she was returned to the Hamble half a mile below Bursledon, where, despite her 'preposterous and cumbersome superstructure' she was identified and noted in the *Yachting Monthly*, April 1924. Childers had been shot by firing squad nearly two years previously at Beggars Bush Barracks, Dublin, by order of the Irish provisional government, but at some point earlier, probably when collecting *Asgard* from the Hamble, he had brought the fate of the old boat to Molly's attention. She was appalled by her undignified circumstances – but at no point did she doubt her identity, of course.

In 1932 she was bought by Claude Hapgood, Moody once again acting as agent, and he towed her to Fishborne, Wootton Creek, on the Isle of Wight. He paid £3 for her and later sold her lead ballast for £4. His enthusiasm for the old boat was driven by his certainty that the story of the *Riddle* was all true ...

He did little to preserve her over the following five years, and just before WWII she was towed in a very poor state to Lymington. Naturally there was little opportunity or motivation to renovate her during the war, and in October 1948, despite a failed attempt by Commander Douglas Dixon, RN, to refurbish her sufficiently to become a memorial to Erskine Childers, the old boat was put to the sword – or more accurately, to the Disston saw of Michael Ian Byard, yard owner, wielded by Steve Biggs, the yard manager.

The last piece of her keel was sent to Molly Childers in America. Her reply is printed on the next page, and



the circumstances of *Vixen's* end, with photographs, may be seen on the small but interesting website containing the Michael Ian Byard collection:

<http://www.yalumba.co.uk/Framesets/Dulcibella.htm>

At this point *Dulcibella* comes within touching distance of our own time. Dick Stower, once senior member of the Laurent Giles team and native of the Isle of Wight, is the nephew of Claude 'Happy' Hapgood and he had been twelve years old when 'Happy' found her by the Hamble river. Even then he saw himself as an evolving yacht designer and drew her lines, recording every detail of her he could make out.

In 1978 Dick was approached by the film producer Drummond Challis, who wanted to fulfil his father's old dream of filming *The Riddle of the Sands*. His father was the renowned film cameraman Christopher Challis, who had, like Dick Stower and Claude Hapgood before him, kept an ongoing file of all things *Dulcibella* / *Riddle*. In his case, ever since the film maker Michael Powell had given him the book to study back in the 1960s. Powell desperately wanted to film it and twice just failed to do so through not being able to raise the money.

Christopher Challis was to make four feature films with his son, who by now had sponsored a script that was faithful to the book and had secured the support of the Rank Organisation, but with poor financial backing:

(Below) Christopher Challis's credits as cameraman are to be found in many of the most famous films of the 20th century, from 1938 to 1985. 67 of them in total.

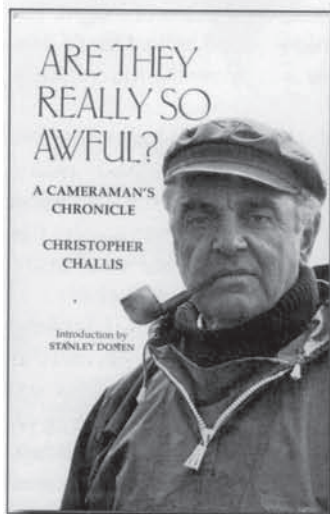
He was a very keen and accomplished sailor, too, owning his own yacht, and he was for years committed to filming *The Riddle*.

His autobiography sheds much light on the industry he worked in (his answer to the question in his book's title was yes, but they were fascinating to be with).

A mere seven pages of his book are spent on filming *The Riddle*, but they are vivid pages. They reveal that some changes had to be made to the script to satisfy the sponsors – probably including the travesty of an ending – and they also evoke the savage discipline of having to find or build a suitable boat and seek out locations for filming in the Frisian islands, in Holland, and in England in

only eight weeks. The film was indeed made in eight weeks and on budget. It 'opened to critical acclaim, but made no profit.'

Judging it now, most would agree that it is filmed beautifully, acted by talented artists at the top of their game, set to an evocative musical score, and true to the time it is set in. The script stays close to Childers's story – except where others have interfered with it. A superb achievement.



it was felt that there was insufficient violence and sex to sell the story to the public. (Interestingly, Childers himself had had qualms about his novel because it seemed to be heavy on sailing detail and onboard domestic arrangements, but light on action. Regarding sex, however, he felt that his publisher had forced him to 'spatchcock' a girl into the story against his better instincts and he forever resented the presence of Clara Dollman: Lord knows what he would have said about Jenny Agutter.

Being a keen South Coast sailor, Christopher Challis knew Robert Bowker, who had published his famous edition of *The Riddle* in 1975 after sailing the Friesians in his own yacht, using Childers's charts and convincing himself that it had all been true. Dick Stower contributed a postscript to Bowker's lengthy annotations accompanying the story. Unfortunately Bowker was one of the *Dulcibella* 'deniers', but presumably his distrust of *Vixen's* provenance was overcome by Dick Stower's hands-on personal knowledge that the boat was genuine.

Drummond Challis asked Dick Stower to accompany him to Cornwall and check the suitability of an ex-RNLI lifeboat for conversion into *Dulcibella*. This turned out to be the *Susan Ashley* of the Isle of Wight, in service from 1907 to 1937, then bought privately and converted into a motor cruiser.

The *Susan Ashley* was seven feet longer than the 28ft

Mrs Erskine Childers  
Brooks Hospital  
Corey Hill  
Brookline  
Massachusetts

November 30, 1948

Dear Mr Byard,

Commander Douglas Dixon has written me of the interest you have taken in the yacht "Dulcibella" all the time that she lay in the Lymington Yard, of the trouble you took and of your wonderful kindness about the inconvenience for your other work. Now, because of her advanced state of decay she has had to be broken up and the wonderful plan to use her as a memorial and to do honour to my husband's book had to be given up. This is a sad disappointment, as you can imagine. But ever since Mr Rogers planned the scheme he and all those who took part in it have won my family's and my deep gratitude. Indeed, there are no words to express what we have felt about it – it was such a lovely example of British understanding. We shall cherish the memory of it all. We thank you with all our hearts for your share in it.

Yours sincerely,

MA Childers





*Susan Ashley*: converted to a motor cruiser in 1937. The buoyant high ends, the belt fendering and the original low curved sheerline that accommodated rowing are clearly seen. (Tim Bungay)

*Thomas Chapman II* had been but she was definitely of the same type, and her size gave elbow room for filming, recording equipment and crew. There is no space here to discuss her history as a lifeboat, but it is a very entertaining one and can be read online in some detail:

<http://www.brookvillagehistory.co.uk/index.php/brooke-lifeboat/memories-of-the-lifeboat/102-bert-morris>

There were just two months to move her to a builder and design and build the conversion that included masts, spars, sails and engine as well as the hull. Then she would travel to Enkhuisen in Holland for the start of filming after sea-trials. The hull arrived late at Tim Bungay's yard at Wellow in Hampshire, and Dick Stower had little time for design work, studying frantically any photographs and drawings of *Vixen* he could find. Christopher Challis had asked him if such extensive work could be done in time, and he records the answer he received in his book:

'Yes, he could, if they worked round the clock with a massive bill for overtime. We had no option, and she cost twice what she need have done. In my experience this is a perfect example of too little too late, a disease which seems to have affected every film I worked on.'

(The chapter on filming the book is entitled, 'The riddle of profits and losses'.)

First the cabin cruiser conversion was removed, including the original self-righting end tanks as well as the deck, coachroof and wheelhouse. (See photographs) The fender belt was removed and the topsides were taken right down to the diagonal planking so carvel cladding could be added above the waterline and also over the framework for the counter, using the same method as Joseph Price had employed on *Vixen* and many other conversions. The deck layout and coachroof were based closely on the drawing of *Vixen*.

Perhaps the greatest feat attained by Dick Stower and Tim Bungay was the high level of authenticity achieved in so short a time:

'The masts, spars and fittings' were all made by Harry Spencer of Cowes ... the standing rigging was made in galvanized plough steel wire with properly served splices, Italian hemp rope was used for the

running rigging, ash blocks came from France and many genuine 'period' fittings were obtained from Davey & Co of Grenade Street, London.

The yawl rig with loose-footed gaff mainsail, jackyard topsail and standing lug mizzen was partly based on such sparse information as could be gleaned from the book, but mostly from contemporary photographs of cruising yachts of the period. One of my problems was knowing how much sail one dare get away

with on a boat with only 3ft 6in draught aft and relying on 5 tons of internal lead ballast: obviously, from the point of view of the film audience, the sail plan had to look as impressive as possible, without overburdening the poor old boat too much. We were fortunate that Harry Spencer had produced a superb hollow mainmast which helped to cut down top weight. The sails were beautifully made by G Sails of Southampton, in cotton with tarred hemp roping and even the staysail hanks were of authentic period pattern. Little details like having the right 'scotch cut' for the headsails and vertical seams for the main were carefully considered.' (Dick Stower, writing in *Classic Boat*, Summer, 1987.)

Had *Susan Ashley* been built a decade earlier with as short a life in service as *Thomas Chapman II*, one's thoughts could have turned to what changes might have occurred in the cruises and in the book, had Childers bought her instead of his 'makeshift', *pis aller*, Hobson's choice – *Vixen*. 'The boat of the film of the book' deserves her place in the Childers canon: it was his boat in many respects – except for the minor objections that he never owned, sailed or saw her. Nevertheless, she is probably physically closer to the *Dulcibella* of the novel than was *Vixen*.

Dick Stower last saw her in 1984 at Poole Quay: 'She had been purchased by two enthusiastic young Germans intent on taking her to Hamburg. It would be interesting to know where she is now.'

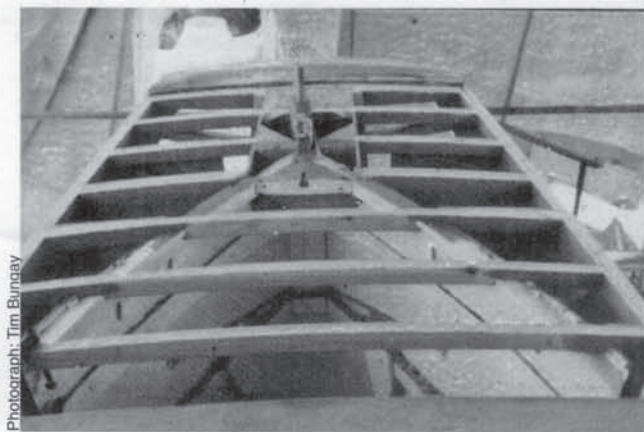
You can summon her up and see her sailing any time you wish by accessing the 1978 film via your computer; it has been placed on youtube in its entirety:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xQMdGfNTJvw>

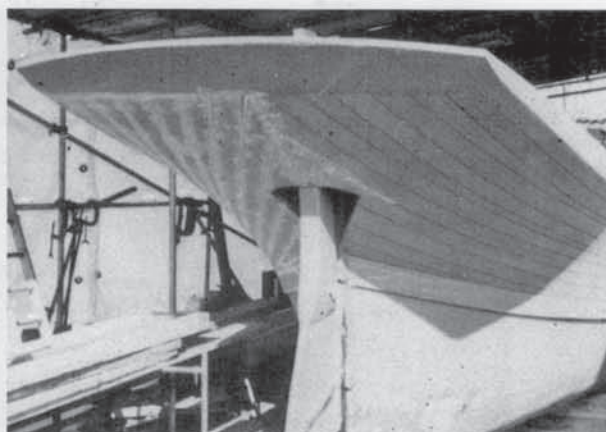
I recall that this strand was initiated some time ago by Len Wingfield saying that he couldn't see how a sail and oar lifeboat might be altered to take a counter stern. A couple of photographs overleaf, taken by Tim Bungay while he and his team worked wonders in less than two months, show everything.

Interestingly, the counter was probably a mixed blessing, as the enclosed flat deck took the helmsman out of an open boat and perched him up in the cold with just his legs inside, but of course the counter was a marker as well: an attempt to show that the old working lifeboat had now become a gentleman's yacht.





Photograph: Tim Bungay



Photograph: Tim Bungay



Photograph: From Christopher Challis's book



Photograph: From Christopher Challis's book

(Clockwise from top) 1. Deck, coachroof and wheelhouse gone, the frames and deck beams are let into the gunwales. 2. Viewed from underneath, the finished counter has been faired into the new carvel planking above the original double diagonal hull, just as Joseph Price of Margate converted *Thomas Chapman II* and many others. 3. Father and son team that worked on four films, Director of Photography Christopher Challis and Producer Drummond Challis. 4. Michael York and Simon MacCorkindale show that they were not just pretty faces as they make sail on *Dulcibella*. Simon Mac seems in character, shouting from the helm.

Finally, two extracts by Erskine Childers you won't find in *The Riddle of the Sands*. One was cut from the first draft of the book by his editor (too sordidly domestic?), and the second appeared in *The Times* as part of a piece entitled *A Frisian Cruise*. Together they represent two extremes from his early cruising experiences. In the first, Carruthers narrates; in the second, Childers writes as himself, of course.

#### *Working below in Dulcibella*


'I'll wash up,' I announced, steeling my soul for the ordeal. And down I went, with enthusiastic directions about waste, buckets, and clothes following me. The scullery, it seemed, was the fo'c'sle and I nearly lost heart over the passage to it.

Happily it had a round hatch of its own cut into the deck, for it was confined to the last degree and I at once knew by the presence of the stove and an immense shiny oil can that I had discovered the sources of the paraffin odour. It was the home too of the anchor-chain which lay on the floor in a heap of rusty coils, one of which rose sluggishly through the hawse pipe overhead and swayed and moaned in a depressing manner.

Other larger objects, such as spare anchors, and in particular a great water-cask in the angle of the peak, loomed in the half light. I sternly repressed all critical tendencies,

collected my plant, crouched on a pile of chain and washed up, proving the mystic properties of cotton-waste as a substitute, where grease is concerned, to water, and realizing among other better truths that to clean a knife without dirtying oneself is the idle dream of a selfish man.

#### *The attractions of the Frisian Islands*

One must possess an innate or acquired liking for low countries and for navigating the intricate shoals which bisect their shores. One must learn to look for beauty, not in lucid blue seas and sunny wooded cliffs, but in vast, almost featureless, distances. For the mainland coast the eye must be content with a fine pencil-line of grey, dotted with a windmill or two, an occasional spire, and a rare clump of trees. Above all, one must love sand in all its manifestations; the delicate pink of the island dune in the evening glow, and all the infinitely various and subtle hues – from umber to pale straw – of dry or drying flats. Monotony of scene must be a joy in itself, and inspiration must be found in a kind of solitude which, if the spirit is not tuned to it, seems more dreary than the dreariest moorlands and the most naked mountains. Not that there is not plenty of warm, human life in Frisia; but the centres of life are far apart as communications in that strange region go. 



I spent the summer playing outdoors, busy canoeing, sailing and biking. Living here in Minnesota a person has to face the reality that winter is coming. For me, winter is a good time to build boats. While I was canoeing or riding around on OPBs, my mind kept coming back to "winter is coming" and what should be my winter project. I have enough canoes. Three solo canoes are all I can justify. I also have two sailboats that get very little use.

Slowly over the summer one name kept popping into my head, "Oar Boat," that kept me on track. I have built several rowboats over the years but they all got sold. I still have *Pogo* in my shed. She is a Jim Michalak designed boat, a Pickup Squared. *Pogo* can be rowed and I do that sometimes but she is not a good rowboat. I want a real rowboat.

I had built several cardboard models over a couple of years so I knew just what I wanted her to look like. I finally came up with one that I considered would fit all my requirements. I wanted a boat that I could transport in the back of my Ranger pickup. I want to eliminate trailers from my life. I never could back up one of those things. Besides that there is a serious parking problem at Lake Nokomis where I do most of my boating.

In order to eliminate the trailer the boat had to be 4' or less in beam to slide into the box of the pickup. The boat should have as long waterline as is reasonable in order to have any speed at all. I figured that a 14' boat would stick out 6' beyond the tailgate which would be the limit so 4'x14' it will be. The models that I made were all simple Flat Iron Skiffs. What could be simpler? OK, so the question next, what should I build it out of?

A few trips to the Big Box store and I decided on a birch plywood hull with mahogany rails. This material was purchased and stored in the shop. My shop gets closed up for the winter because the metal roll up door has an R factor of about .005. In the winter I cover the opening with plywood panels with 2" foam cemented on. The shop has a very limited space so I have to do any ripping of long pieces with the door open. The mahogany rails got made first, then the winter covers went on.

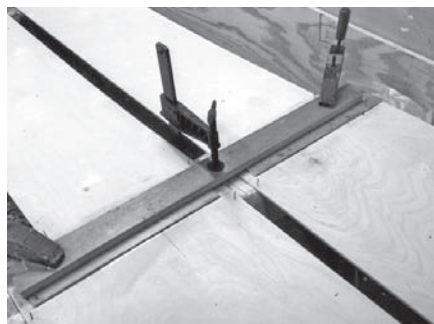
After I scarfed the rails and glued them together to get some 15' rails, they got stored overhead and it was time to start cutting plywood. I borrowed a tool from my son, an aluminum straightedge that works as a guide for ripping sheets of plywood. It clamps itself onto a 8' plywood sheet and really controls the cuts. I started by cutting a piece off to 6' long and set the 2' remaining part back into storage. All the dimensions were scaled up from the cardboard model. I laid out an 8' panel and ripped off two 19" parts. I next cut the 6' panel into two 16" parts. The extra wood also went into storage.

My sawhorses have a 2'x8' top laid flat. I set up my sawhorses to support the panels. The wider ones were to become the bow sides and the 16" ones the stern. I put one horse under the joint where these panels were to join and covered it with some wax paper. I laid up the panels, carefully lining up the factory edges. These would become the sheer line. When I was happy with the alignment, I nailed them down to the sawhorse with wire brads. I was careful to leave room for the butt blocks. I cut the butt blocks out up 1/4" plywood with bevels on all the edges. These blocks ended up about 5" inches wide. I made sure that they fit between the nails and it was time to mix some epoxy.



## By Mississippi Bob Oar Boat

The epoxy that I use is an Adteck product that they call Marine Epoxy System. I can buy this locally and I like the way it works. I had a choice of using a West System product but I find that it is too viscous to suit me. I could buy either locally also but I prefer the Adteck. In any further discussion about epoxy it will be the Adteck. I mixed up some epoxy with the 3/1 pumps and painted the underside of the butt blocks and the area where they would fit. I centered them up and clamped a 1"x4" piece down on the horse as shown in the photo.



The next day I removed the clamps and laid the panels out one on top of the other with the butt blocks out. I lined up the top edges, the sheer line and clamped them together. All this work is being done by scaling up from the model. First I cut off the stem and stern shapes with the Skil Saw. I then used a batten that I had to draw a line where the parts would get cut. I clamped the batten to the bottom edge of the 16" panel and then bent the it to reach the lower corner of the 19" piece at the bottom of the stem. This would create the line that I wanted. I cut this off with the Skil Saw, keeping it as close to the line as I could because this edge would become the joint between the sides and the bottom. This kind of construction is quite forgiving.

Now I reversed the panels so that the butt blocks were inside facing each other and wire tied the bow together. I then cut out a temporary form for the center shape and another for the transom. These were cut out of some 1/4" plywood. I put the center form between the side panels and tied a rope around the assembly to hold it in place. I next installed the temporary transom 2' forward of the stern and screwed it in with some small wood screws. The photo shows the boat at this stage.



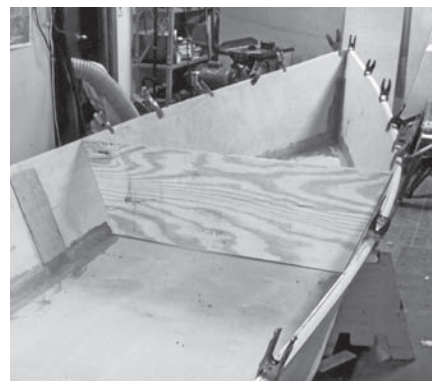
The sides at this point were flopping around without a very fair shape to them so I used one set of rails that I had made and clamped them in place for temporary gunnels. I put all my spring clamps into use. Now it was starting to look like a boat. I adjusted the position of the center form until I was happy with the overall shape and screwed it in place with small wood screws. OK, it looked like a boat.

I was thinking back to when I built the Michalak boats. Gee, it was nice to have plans to follow. Jim had all the bevels for all the forms and transoms down to the degree and the exact placement of all the parts. I am flying by the seat of my pants on this one.

I built a small kayak a few years ago. The only wire ties were at the stem. The boat had a very small triangular transom that was nailed and glued in place permanently. The inwales had been installed. This was a summer project and I built it on my garage floor. One temporary center form tacked in place and it looked like a good kayak should.

I set this assembly on top of the bottom panel that I had previously scarfed together. I drew a line around the hull a little oversize to get the shape of the bottom panel, sawed off the excess and laid it back on the garage floor. I set the sides back on top of the bottom and wedged the bottom up against the sides and glued it in place with a large fillet.

I thought I could build this skiff the same way. There is a big difference, mostly in the size. Getting the plywood bottom panels shaped and held up against the sides took a little doing. The rear panel was basically a sheet of plywood with a little surplus cut off. I set one sawhorse up at the transom and a second one where the end of the plywood fell. I had a couple of stools that were about the right height and slid them under the boat and wedged the panel up to the sides. Photo at this stage.



At this point I was still not happy with the shape of the sides so I installed the seat rails to help stiffen the sides. This helped a lot. I ended up still needing a few wire ties to hold the sides in place. Finally satisfied, it was time to mix some resin. I cut a bunch of bias strips



about 3" wide and as long as the glass piece allowed. I cut these with the ends rounded so there were no glass fibers ready to jump out. I began to tab them into the hull putting them halfway across the joint. I had to bypass the spots where the wire ties were but I was getting enough tabs to hold things together.

The forward section was much easier because it was much smaller. I joined the two bottom panels with a butt block on the inside. I wire tied a few places on this forward section and got the shape I wanted. Then I tabbed it in place. Another photo at this stage. When this was all cured, out came the wire ties and I completed the tabbing where the ties had been.

I kept thinking back to the Michalak boat, the Pickup Squared. That boat was built upside down and the sides were simply glued on with epoxy and nailed onto the chine rails. The only good reason for not doing it that way is because Jim's boat had the rails outside of the hull and I wanted to eliminate

these rails altogether. I made myself a lot of excess work.

Now it was time to make the permanent transom and get it installed. I used the temporary one as a pattern and cut out three layers of 1/4" plywood and epoxied them together. When cured, I cut out hand holds using a hole saw and jigsaw. The top of the transom is rounded up into a pleasing arch. I ran my router over this top edge and inside the hand holds rounding up these edges. Then it was time to install it.

The temporary transom was 2" ahead of where the real one should go. The finished transom had to be a little smaller than the temporary one. I figured that I could just whittle it down to size. I have a power jointer that got used at this time. I set the fence up at the angle where the bottom joins the transom and ran that edge over the jointer until I had the proper bevel, then I did the same with the sides. I began testing it for fit as I removed

wood. It is always nice when your plans work out. I got a nearly perfect fit. I buttered up all the edges with some thickened epoxy and screwed it into place.

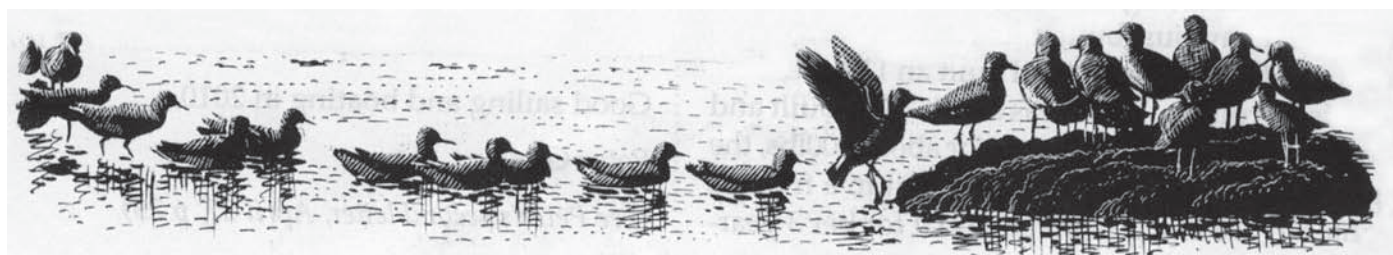
Now it really looks like the boat I had planned. Next issue I will glass the inside then roll it over and glass the outside.



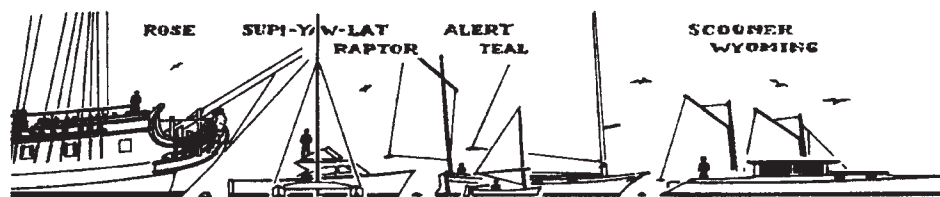
## Meanwhile, somewhere west of Minnesota...



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## Phil Bolger & Friends On Design

CHEBACCO Sedan  
 Power Cruiser

Versions 2 through 4

Design #540: 19'8x7'5"x  
 1'1'6"/1'7"x10/25/60HP

Yes a "Three-Fer!" Three variations on the theme I raised in the last issue, a power boat variant of the unballasted trailer sailer Cat-Yawl. And again, the assumption here is the 20' double chine plywood of CHEBACCO with the Raised Deck layout. Last issue a wheelhouse was added with 6'4" headroom and a 10hp swapped for the original 4hp outboard to arrive at what we would now call Version #1.

As already touched upon last month, here in Version #2 it seemed appropriate to explore raising the foredeck height to get more comfortable quarters below yet and perhaps arrive at a more balanced proportion for such a small raised deck power cruiser. What is shown here is a solid 6" higher foredeck on the same wheelhouse and aft cockpit levels. And this really has resulted in a different flavor of her.

No doubt a lot of this is in the eyes of the beholder. But gaining almost 5" of bunk height for easier peeling yourself out of your comforter along with another 1" of sitting headroom and, of course, another half a foot at her stem height for a 4' vertical edge to part head-seas at full power sounds attractive enough.

Part of this exercise was also to add to her keel depth to offer the 10-25hp outboard lower unit solid protection with that 18" draft which, of course, will return some of the more deliberate tracking the sailing version has between centerboard, shallow keel and rudder. On the latter, we might still want to consider hanging a 1' long blade off that keel's trailing edge, permanently linked to the outboard's motion since in following seasons that would reduce the dramatics at the helm to keep her on her course under just a modest outboard's lower-unit.

Version #3 is yet another obvious flavor once you move down this thinking. Here a small British Sillette-Sonic Saildrive Mk 2 will accept modest input power via a 2:1 reduction turning up to 16" props. So one of those Mouse engines, as Phil called them, a tiny Yanmar/Kubota/etc with between 10hp and 25hp will be an intriguing option to explore, swinging a good sized alternator to boot for cruising correct amenities such as a microwave, hot plate, etc, via a good house bank perfectly fed every day.

How to get the power down to the prop? To not ruin the cockpit we'd pick the C configuration on that saildrive which allows power input from behind. Then we'd place that Mouse engine alongside the saildrive with the gear box aiming aft. And then it's time for a toothed belt and pulley to get that power across from the engine to the sail drive's input shaft. We will have to consider whether we'd want the second pulley on a stub shaft to take the belt's radial pull via a dedicated set of bearings to then connect to the saildrive with a simple coupling.

If we looked at the somewhat larger Saildrive Mk 1 we'd get a F-N-R gear-box integrated into the head of the drive unit. Again picking the C configuration of the sail drive, input would come from behind. Behind it, connected to the saildrive with a simple coupling, sits a PITTS electric clutch on its own stub shaft to take the drive belt's radial pull via a dedicated set of bearings. Picking a side along the sail drive, the belt won't care, we'd now be in position to look at one of the many lovely horizontal shaft 15-25hp air cooled Kohler/Honda/Briggs & Stratton industrial V-2 gasoline engines to push her along. Since you'd mount this engine higher in its own slop well, it will drain its gas fumes aft and out.

Yes, we may need another stub shaft since yanking on the engine's output shaft from a 3 o'clock or 9 o'clock position may risk ruining the crankshaft bearing. So it's two more bearings, another coupling and a stub shaft. This is almost as parts heavy as your car's drive train. But these are little pieces straight out of the industrial supply catalogues usually competitively priced. And you get to cultivate a constructive relationship with your friendly machine shop for cutting a keyway into those shaft pieces and whatever else you'll find good reasons for visiting those places. Ahh, what component-geometries to perfect, the budget variations to run and to then discover whatever you've overlooked, to end up with the drive train you deem fit.

With either inboard option we'd add another inch to her keel depth to clear that 15"-16" prop and support that underslung rudder. Not shown here is the option to do an outboard hung rudder which can look quite appealing as well, perhaps with integrated steps as a get back aboard ladder. And then you'd inevitably picture yourself standing facing forward and tiller under your arm, peering over the wheelhouse. That may be good for a few and tempts with assuming the proper posture, pea coat, cap, pipe and all. The stuffed parrot, however, stays bolted to her stem in lieu of carved pretties to greet the world with. But why a pipe ??

Some would object, of course, that you'd obstruct the transom which, if kept clear, would actually allow a 5'6" Shoebox transversely off a davit for the times when conditions have you rather not be concerned with what that dink is doing hunting around on a longer leash.

And then there is Version #4, the Go Fast flavor sporting a 60hp large prop 4-cylinder turning a 13"-14" prop, here probably good to hit 20 knots and happily purr along at 12 knots for best compromise between fuel burn, progress and noise. Twelve affordable knots with the option of attempting to maintain 20 is a plausible way to evade weather you've been careless about tracking, allows decent progress up river and suggests faster crossing of exposed waters on your itinerary. All that, as long you'll keep an eye on the inherently limited fuel load one can carry on a modest hull such as this, such as perhaps 30gals below her cockpit sole plus perhaps another 20gals in two wing tanks under the benches.

We get this higher speed capability by running her mid section straight aft while thus also gaining displacement aft to carry the much bigger engine and its fuel. Then we trim off that keel down to a modest keel plank on which she'd sit on her trailer rollers. Some might even dream of a juiced up 50hp turbo-Diesel turning a small I/O drive.

Whether gasoline or Diesel, three to four folks might enjoy going a fair distance offshore for some fine day fishing, with two fishing left and right in her cockpit, one driving and perhaps the fourth standing in the hatch forward with yet another rod. Or just two roaming to find those holes if not canyons for one or several overnights next to that cooler and its crushed ice to keep the precious catch looking good.

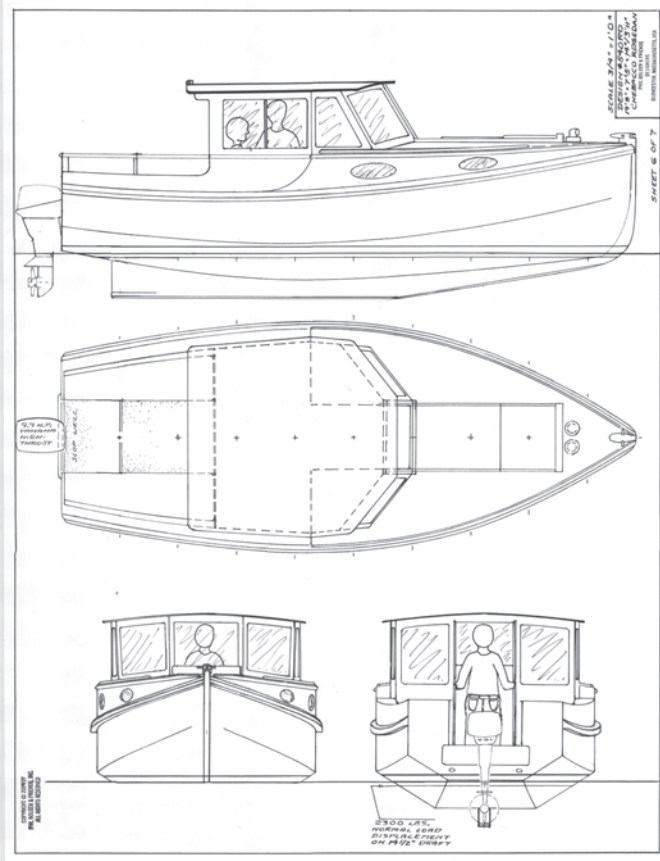
No doubt a Version #5 would see the outboard set in for a flush transom again should a marina deal reduce the cost per foot that much. And it may just be that the drive-way or the larger garage suggests keeping her at just under 20' to make things fit best. That would work on the 6knot and the 20knot outboarder option.

Clearly there is a close resemblance to the 15', 18' and 23' Diablo open double chine skiffs that have proved good rough water boats. In fact, going way back in time, Phil played that theme with several Texas Dories up to the low 30's. And, of course, more recently there is 31' Samuel Clyde with that Diablo hull shape and a conventional I/O drive. Whether with go fast or go slow shape on this 20' raised deck cruiser geometry, the section should give a decent account of herself in choppy conditions.

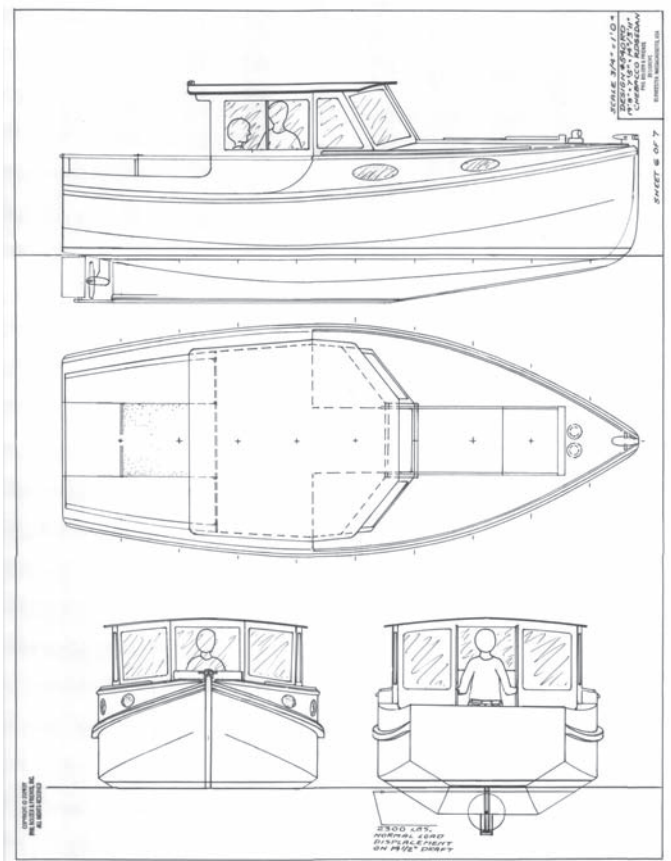
I have these versions hanging on the cork walls in the office to take time out between less delightful work for a bit of dream rusing with her for a few minutes. Phil sure never broke that habit with whatever concepts hanging in plain sight. Not sure though whether he stood at the tiller of his 48' liveaboard Resolution smoking a pipe.

I am not sure either yet about the next issue, but we may see another somewhat counter intuitive interpretation of the Chebacco 20 theme. Just don't hold me to it though!

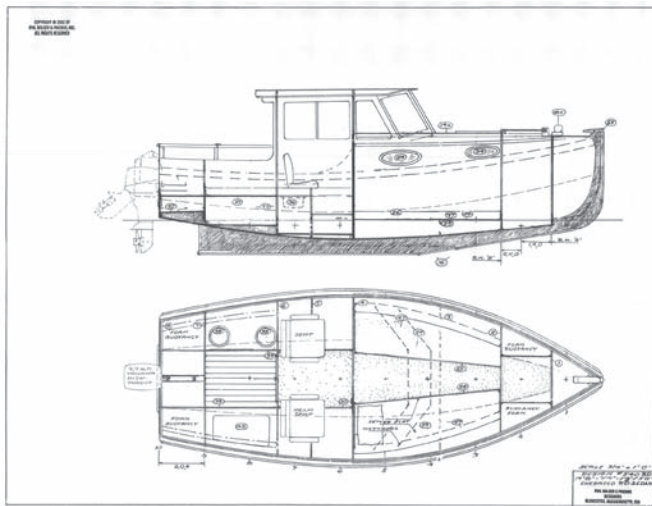




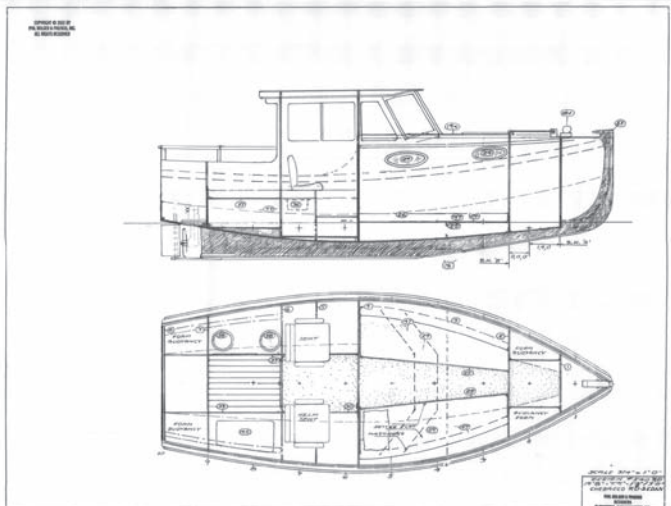
Version 2 Outboard



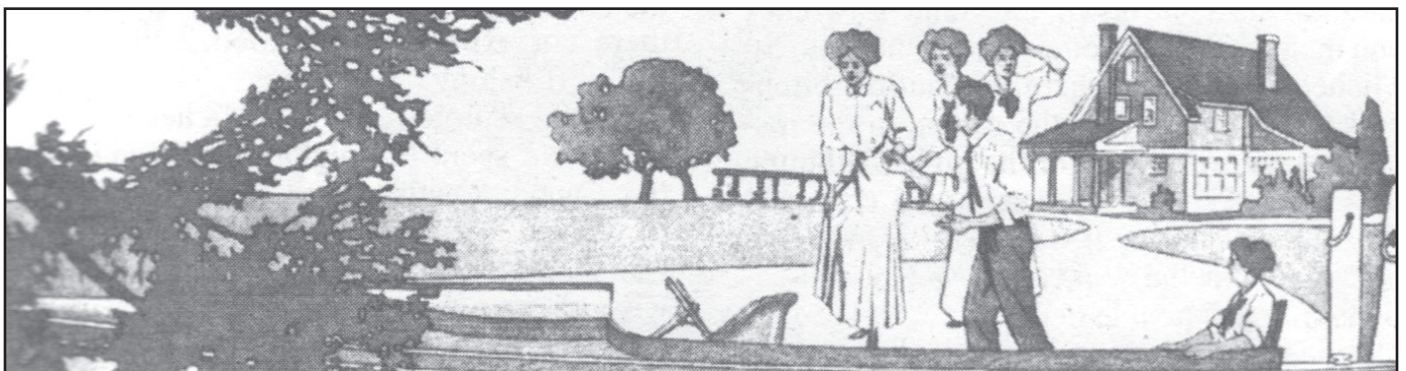
Version 3 Outboard



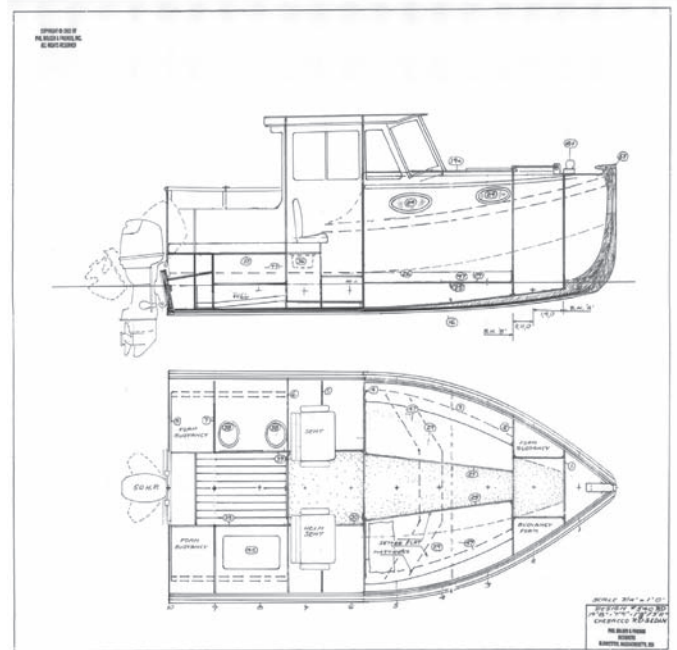
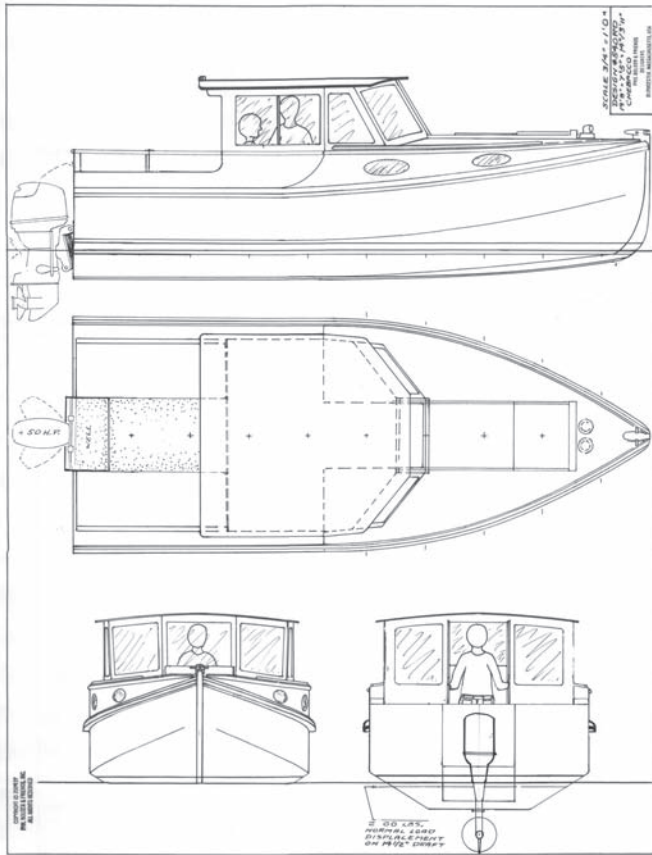
Version 2 Inboard



Version 3 Inboard



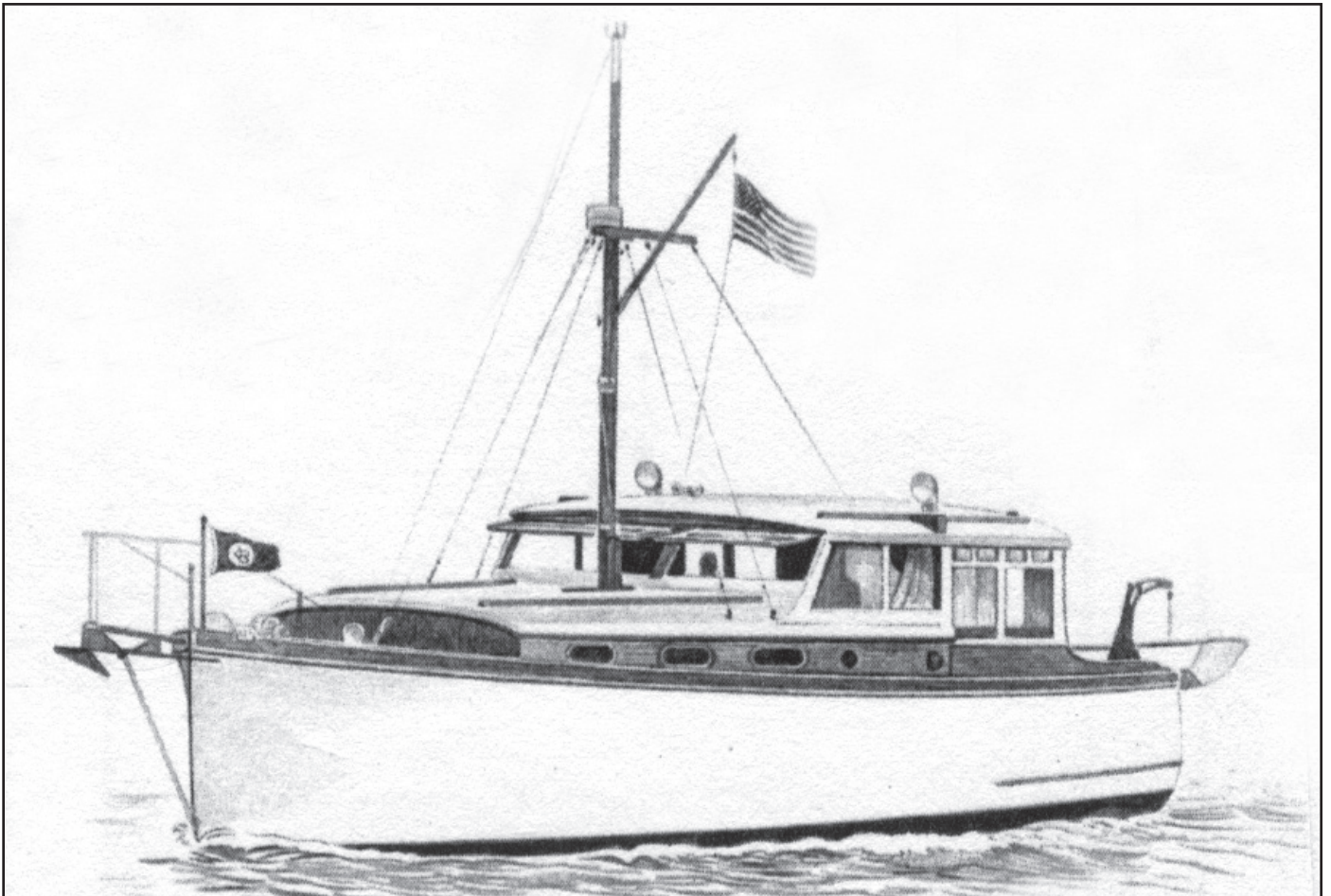




Version 4 Inboard

Version 4 Outboard

## A Sedan Cruiser from the Golden Years





I read about a device the other day for providing emergency home electric power and wondered if it would be suitable for auxiliary power on a boat. Tesla's Powerwall is advertised as a home battery that can be charged using electricity generated from solar panels or from the power grid when utility rates are low. Powerwall is intended to store electricity and make it available to your home in the event of a power outage. I thought it might be a good idea as an alternate solar powered power supply for a boat until I looked into the specifications of the device. While it can be solar charged, it seems a little large for a boat (and no word yet on a marine version). The device weighs 220lbs, which is not that bad. But a bulkhead is needed that will mount the 51.2"x33.9"x7.1" device. Then, there is the wiring, regulator, etc. for the 7kw version.

When my wife and I were racing Tornados, and later Fireballs, beach launching was the way to go. When the day sailer fleet gathered for a race, everyone got involved in moving the boats from the trailers to the shoreline. None of the boats were heavy and usually four people could pick up the Hobies, Lasers, Windmills and the like and carry them down to the water. A couple of members had "carts" designed to move their boats to the water. The race committee boat and any other powerboats had to be launched at the ramp.

What brought the above to mind was an advertisement for "Sealegs" to be used with a powerboat. The setup has a bow wheel and a wheel on the each side at the stern fitted to the boat. The wheels are lowered/raised and powered with a battery and allow you to have an amphibious boat that rolls up onto (or off) the beach. The problem for most of us, according to the information I received from the manufacturer's representative, is the need for structural integrity of the hull to carry the boat's weight out of the water. Their product is built into a hull designed to carry the load on the wheels without deforming the hull. Retrofitting an existing boat may be possible, but not probable.

Coast Guard reports on boat accidents are interesting reading as to what not to do



on the water. In one case reported a commercial fishing boat hit an unlighted tower and later sank. In the report on the incident it was noted that the unlit tower was noted on a NOAA chart. However, the skipper was using an electronic chart that had only the word "tower" on it and did not have the exact location. The e-chart the skipper was using was set for a scale of 1"=1 nautical mile. At that scale, the exact location of the tower would be difficult to pinpoint. The skipper did not realize how close the boat was to the tower and did not have a lookout forward at the time of the collision with the tower.

Seeing an unlit object at night is difficult, as is seeing one in daylight under certain conditions as your height of eye determines how far you can see. There are tables for determining the distance to the horizon based on the height of eye in most almanacs. Or you can work on how far you can see (distance to the horizon) with the formula:

$1.17 \text{ times the square root of your height of eye} = \text{distance to the horizon in nautical miles}$ . For example, if your height of eye is 9' above the surface of the water, the formula would be  $1.17 \text{ times the square root of } 9 = \text{distance to the horizon in nautical miles}$ , thus  $1.17 \times 3 = 3.51 \text{ nautical miles}$ . If your boat is moving at 6 knots you would reach the "horizon" in a little under 30 minutes.

There is more than one formula for this calculation. The second one uses 1.22 as the factor. A "rule of thumb" for the average height person standing on the beach at the water's edge is that the horizon is 3 nautical miles away. The first step is to know your height of eye. One way is to look straight

ahead at the height scale at the doctor's office (usually above the scale). Another is, with someone's help if needed, to stand on a tape measure and hold it up in front of you. With either method, looking straight ahead at the scale/tape will let you read your height of eye. You then figure out your height of eye standing in your boat and do the calculation.

Iceboats do not do well in the water and water boats do not do well on ice. However, I read one time about a hybrid boat that does both, the Great South Bay "Scooter." It was described as a duck punt with a bowsprit, a gaff rigged main (with a 10:1 sheet) and a "balanced" jib. The evolution of the Scooter is not well documented as it did not evolve from a designer's drawing board nor was there a class association. It evolved out of necessity.

Take an old duck punt and add runners, a spritsail or gaff for power and a jib to steer the boat. Angle the runners (bevel) to bite into the ice and to prevent the boat from sliding sideways. Add a bit of rocker (curve) to the runners to enhance steerage and you have a "Scooter." The Scooter was steered by her jib. By trimming or slackening the jib, one can change course. To head up, ease the jib and trim the main. To bear off, trim the jib and ease the main. Shifting weight forward or aft accordingly accelerates the process. For more information on this boat, take a look at <<http://icescooter.org/>>. Go to History (left side list) and read about the old boats (about halfway down in the article).

Is it a transmission, propeller or bearing problem when there are noises and vibrations when the transmission is shifted into gear? In such an event, the usual place to start is the propeller. Has something wrapped around it? Are there barnacles on parts of the blades that unbalances it? The next place is the transmission. Removing and checking the transmission can be an expensive proposition. After the drive shaft is unbolted, and before the transmission is removed, start up the engine and put into both forward and reverse gear and see if you still have any noise or vibration. If not, your boat's shaft or cutlass bearing could be the problem.

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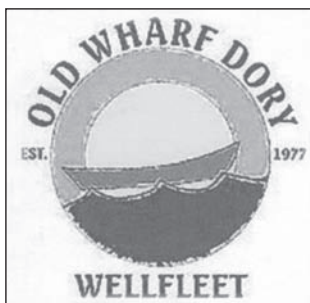
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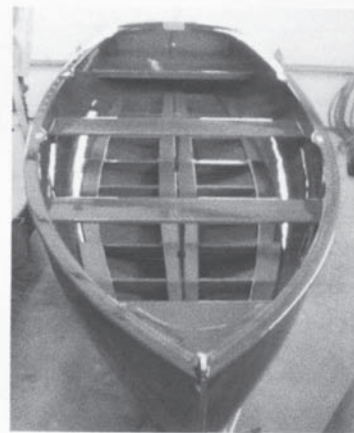
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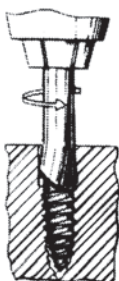
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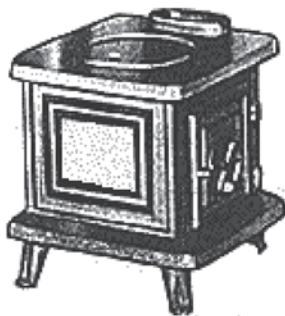
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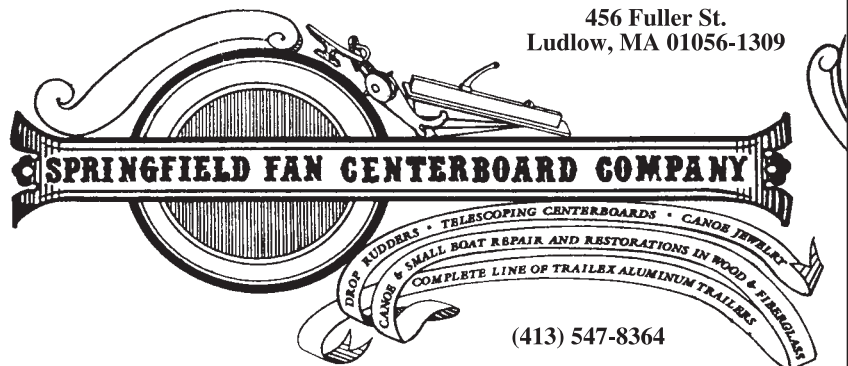
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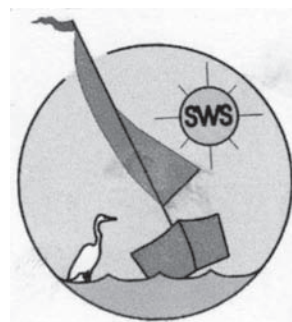
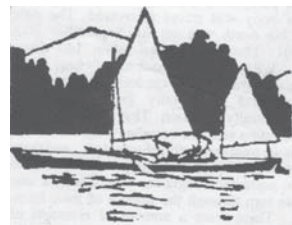
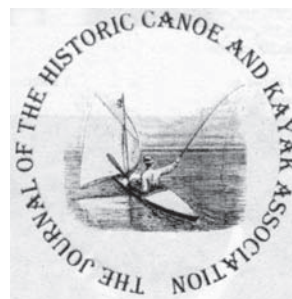
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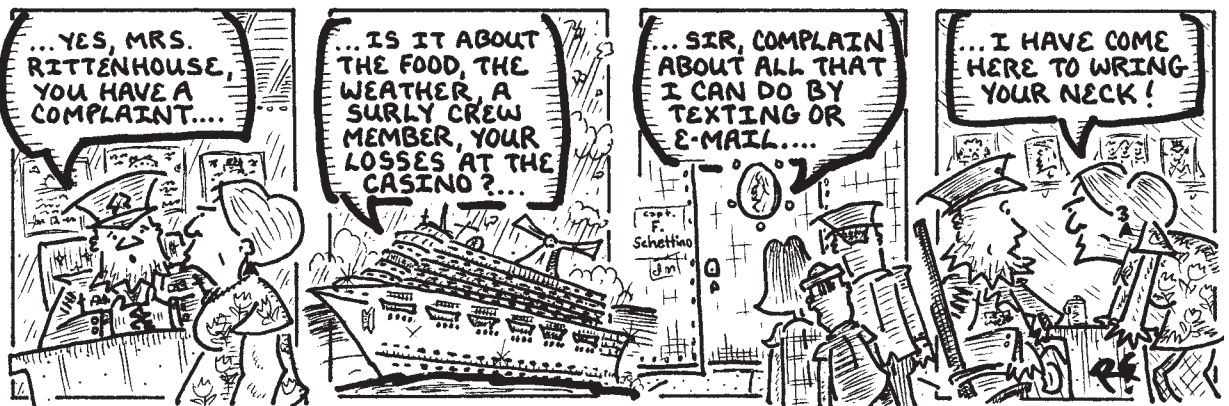
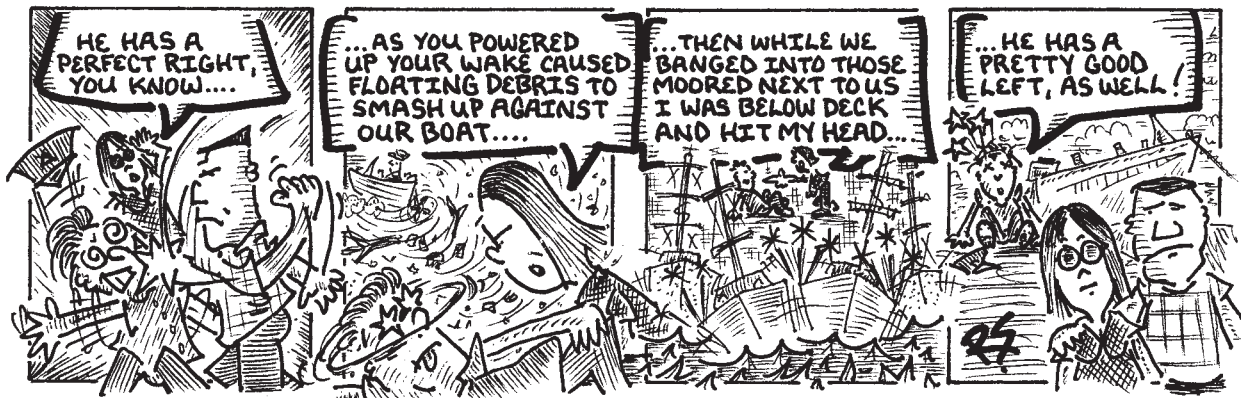
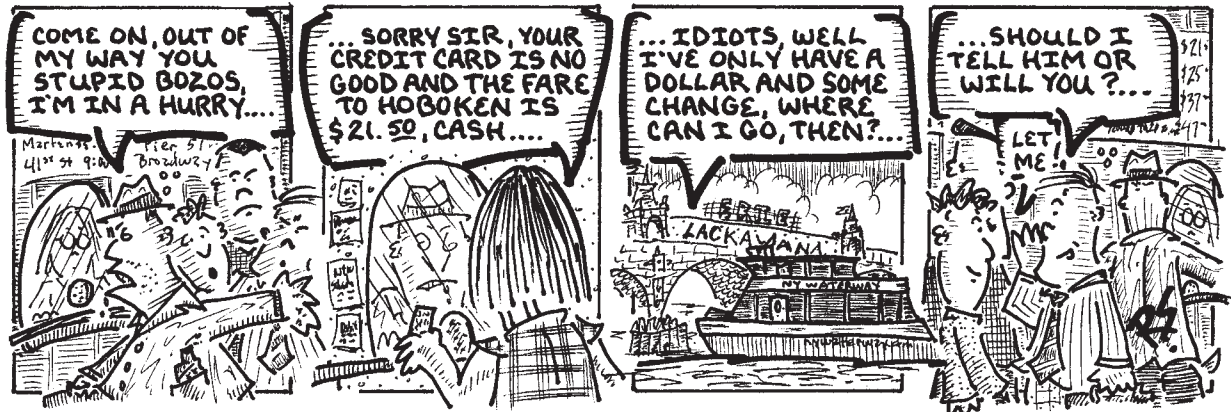
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